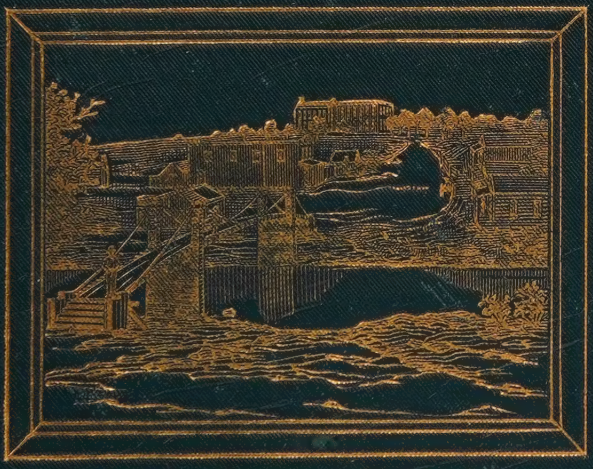
A Waif From Texas.

"Will you let me in?"



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A WAIF FROM TEXAS.

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DALLAS, TEXAS

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Dedication.

TO THE LADIES OF TEMPLE,

WHOSE CONTINUED KINDNESS
HAS SO ENCOURAGED ME,
AND TO MANY OTHERS
IN THE STATE AT LARGE
WHOSE FRIENDSHIP IS DEAR TO ME,
I LOVINGLY DEDICATE
THIS LITTLE BOOK.

KATE ALMA ORGAIN.

Temple, Texas.

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THE OLD SETTLER'S STORY.

LIFE had been very pleasant for Annie Garland in her Georgia home, and Savannah is a grand old city in which to have been born. The beauty of the ocean was ever spread before the girl's vision, and love for its bounding billows and white-capped waves grew with every hour of her childhood. It means something to be born near the ocean. There are emotions touched in our nature which nothing else reaches, except perhaps it be a mountain range.

The girl grew up with poetic sentiment, quickly responsive nature and love for beauty of surroundings not easily uprooted, yet when Charley Campbell came back from Texas with his manly, clear-cut face, his tender, dark gray eyes, his superb physique, and whispered "I love you Annie; I want you in my Texas home," she forgot the blue of the ocean, the dash and foam of its waves, the matchless grandeur of its plunging billows, and her wedding tour was a long journey overland to distant Texas, where Charley had secured a large tract of land not many miles above the little settlement called

Waco, in the new county of McLennan. Here Charley had begun to carve his own fortunes on the frontier.

He considered himself fortunate in getting a good log cabin built and furnished with a pine bedstead and six home-made chairs, bottomed with rawhide. The happiness of the honeymoon, the honest love in Annie's heart for the gallant man, her husband, lent a glamour for a time to this new wild life, this undreamed of experience, and even helped the bareness and wretched look of the log cabin. But one can not quickly change the trend of existence. When the habits and accustomed associations of our lives are suddenly rent assunder, we can not easily fit into the new grooves or ever perhaps again be our old selves, because feeling is not always obedient to one's command.

So after a while Annie, in the entirely new and uncongenial surroundings, became keenly affected by this severing of every familiar phase of girlhood, the withdrawal from all society, the absence of everything hitherto of interest to her young mind. The busy man, her husband, a true child of nature, reveled in possession of the broad acres of land, now his own to improve and beautify. He looked with pride upon the heavy timbered bottoms and over the magnificent stretch of prai-

rie in front. "Just be patient and hopeful, Annie, dear. When I get in my land and make good crops I'll build you a fine house. Don't look so gloomy, little one," Charley said. But nothing kills a young creature like the dreariness of long continued waiting,—the long, friendless days passing one by one in eternal sameness. This kills slowly, but surely, as water dropping wears the rock away.

There was nothing in this home that had any attraction for Annie save the man for whom she had suddenly changed her whole life. Nothing of beauty gladdened her hungry eye in this rough cabin on the Brazos. She cooked their simple meals, washed and put away the dishes and then sat for hours looking with saddened eyes upon the vast loneliness around her, the interminable stretches of prairie on one side, the deep-shadowed timber on the other. At night she heard the howl of the wolf or trembled at the fearful cry of the panther. Sometimes to while away the lonely idle hours she opened her trunks and tenderly unfolded the pretty dresses, soft mousselines, dreamy silks, rich laces. What good were they to her in this wilderness? And with head bent low Annie wept over these relics of past gayety.

She loved Charley dearly, and bravely at first she strove to hide all trace of these bursts of sorrow, this homesickness, but his tender watchfulness noted the coming pallor and sadness of the girlish face.

"I ought never to have brought Annie to this wild western country," he said, gloomy and disheartened, as he plowed up and down the long furrows of his new field, and she, poor child, knelt alone in the log cabin praying that this longing for dear old Georgia, for old associates, for the surging and beating ocean waves, for its white caps and darkened depths, might be taken out of her soul.

Charley toiled faithfully to improve and build up his new home, in McLennan County, but drouths came, no corn was raised, even horses were fed upon wheat. The disappointment, the failure, the privations of Annie's life grew intolerable. She had no books, no piano, no social life, nothing but the uninteresting preparation of food three times a day. Just eating and sitting around. What a life! It was unbearable. Then unwisely she began using her influence and affection to pursuade Charley to give up this wretched frontier life, and return with her to the civilization and comfort of Georgia.

"Why, Charley," she would say, "men are making

homes and fortunes there, without the sacrifice of everything dear to a human being!" But Charley Campbell saw a rich heritage for them both in this beautiful country, and this black land would have a valuation which neither drought nor occasional failure of crop could depreciate. He thought in time that Annie would see this, and he would reward her, oh, so richly, for all sacrifice.

But when Annie found him unmoved by her solicitations she worked herself to the belief that Charley had become indifferent to her happiness. The wedge of doubt and disagreement entered between the occupants of the log cabin and the heart of Annie became hardened and estranged.

"No man loves a woman who brings her to such a wilderness as this, and makes her life what mine is," said the girl bitterly reproaching her husband. So it came to pass that day after day no smile or loving kiss met Charley, when the shadows of evening brought him home, and he sat alone in silence out on the little gallery after supper, while Annie moped inside. What could Charley do? He could not leave his farm and give up all they had. This meant ruin. Traveling in these days was a big undertaking. He could not take

the long journey to Georgia himself, and it would be unsafe for Annie to attempt such a trip alone.

Annie nursed her wretched discontent exclaiming, "If I could get away from this wild West! Oh, if I were once more in old Georgia." Yet often her better, her loving nature rose out above this selfishness, and a desire toward heroic womanly endurance would assert itself when she remembered the constant tenderness of Charley, and saw the pained look in his patient eyes, the worn, drooping expression of his dear face. She really loved him, down deep in her heart he was enthroned her king. For a time the absorbing thoughts of her own griefs would be put aside and she would almost vow to be content with this miserable existence, but soon would come a day of utter homesickness and passionate denunciation of western life in Texas, its loneliness, its emptiness, its baldness. At last Charley said, "Annie, I am sorry I asked you to share my hard lot in life. I owe you all the reparation I can make. If an opportunity comes so that you can safely go back to the old State I will arrange for you to go, and remain."

The words did not make her happy for the look of her husband's face, the agony of his dark eye and the

quiver of his lip hurt her like a wound. But she steeled herself against this reasserting tenderness, and after a moment said, "I will go, I would die here."

A climax of horror came soon, which more fully determined her to leave the wretched life on the frontier. One day sudden business compelled Charley to go to Waco, then but a little struggling village. The roads were fearful from recent heavy rains, and the journey would have to be made on horseback.

"Annie, I do regret to leave you alone all day. I will not delay in town an hour, but it will be way late in the night before I can possibly get back." "If this is love and happiness in the West, I have had enough of it," she answered in passionate abandon of feeling.

The wretched look on Charley's face startled her, but dread of the lonely hours before her, miserable fear and hatred for all this hard life swept away every consideration, and dropping into a rough hide-bottom chair on the rude porch, she sobbed in selfish and unrestrained grief. For hours she sat there in desolation. The sun went down and darkness brought more terror. The screech owl screamed his horrid note near by. From out the gloomy bottom came the fearful cry of wolves, and Annie shivered in absolute fear. She had grown up

in Georgia a gentle, timid girl without one unpleasant shadow resting anywhere.

"My God!" she cried in frightened voice, "what a life this is to live." Then she rose and entered the cabin. Perhaps she could go to sleep and forget. She fastened the mosquito bar well round the bed. The night was hot and sultry. The room was stifling. She left the door partly open for air. How long she slept she could not tell, when some noise, some sudden sense of terror, woke her. With startled gaze she looked out toward the fireplace and there fully outlined by the light of the rising moon, she saw a large panther. Almost fainting she lay still, praying to the good God to take her, and not let her die a dreadful death. Slowly and with stealthy tread the huge beast came to the bedside, where Annie lay motionless, almost dead with fear. She did not know, poor little woman, what old hunters learned long ago—that a mosquito bar was about as good protection from a panther as a shotgun. She lay there in agony while the hot breath of the brute almost touched her cold brow. "Oh, God!" she thought passionately, "that a woman should bear such things as these, for a black land farm in Texas." How she hated it.

One hour of mortal agony, then the panther went quietly out of the cabin door. Annie had come to the settled resolve to turn her back upon all such life. She would go home to Savannah, to civilization, to the beautiful ocean shores once more. When Charley came home from his long and exhausting ride, there was no kindly greeting. He heard with deep distress her tale of terror. Instead of going to bed, he seated himself out in the waning moonlight, and fought the battle of his life. Unselfish love conquered. Annie should go home; he would not longer blight her young life. Her step should grow light again, her eye bright, her laugh should ring out happy and clear in old Georgia.

He had inquired in Waco and found a family going back almost to Savannah. He would tell Annie and she could go with them to the life she loved and to the environments congenial to her. "Annie," he said, in a voice of deep emotion, at breakfast, "my life is too hard for you, little girl. I am sorry for your sake that I ever brought you from your sweet old home. But, oh! I loved you, Annie, and life seemed nothing without you, and I felt brave to bear all things, even a Texas frontier with you, dear. I found a nice family going right back to your home on Monday, and I have arranged for you

to go with them, and may God bless you, Annie, and forgive me for spoiling so much of your young life." There was a moment of oppressive silence. Annie said at last, "What are you going to do?" The suddenness of it all had startled her. She saw the unhappy look of that good, kind face she had loved truly, and had been so proud of in the days of her early married life. As she looked at Charley now, the agony of his soul showed so deeply there was no mistaking its intensity. The painful tension of the lips, the pallor of his brow frightened her. "Are you sick, Charley?" she said suddenly, with a touch of tenderness. "No," he answered.

After a moment she repeated her first question, "What are you going to do?"

"I will stay on my land. It is all I have in the world. I'll just grow up with the country, I reckon," he replied, his trembling lips vainly trying to take on a smile.

All day when Charley was gone out Annie tried to pack her trunk and get ready for her Georgia. She must take out Charley's things. She did not like to do that. There was his wedding suit. How handsome he had looked in it, and how his devotion for her had shone from his bright eyes that happy wedding day. There were wedding presents. How could they be di-

vided? How lonesome Charley's things looked piled off by themselves.

A swift revulsion of feeling, a new sense of desolation came over her as she thought of being so far from her husband, and Charley, why he would be all alone. But after all, there was no use to think of it, for she could not live there, she couldn't stand panthers and everything. Then she lifted up and carefully folded her dresses. She did love beautiful clothes, the little woman—bless her—why shouldn't a woman care for pretty dressing? God gave indorsement and magnificent conception of dress when he planned and ordered Aaron's robe of finest linens, blue and purple, and scarlet in color, fastened with rings of pure gold, and then added to its beauty by studding the corsage with rubies, sapphires, diamonds and emeralds. Annie reveled a moment in delightful anticipation of wearing her beautiful dresses.

Then she picked up a photograph of Charley taken on their wedding morn. How willingly she had come into his life. How happy he looked. That strong, yet noble, tender face. Those eyes had even to the present hour, always a loving look for her. Like a revelation came the recognition of the unselfishness of the sacri-

fice Charley was making for her happiness. Letting her go back, without one reproach to ease and pleasure, remaining himself with only toil and manual labor, with naught to sustain him but his manly grit and determination. How generous, how grand the man. How mean, how selfish, how untrue the woman.

All day Sunday with self-imposed condemnation and burdened heart, she silently watched Charley. If he would just say one reproachful word, but the day passed and night covered their little cabin home. Charley's food at supper was untasted, but with gentle kindness he said: "Annie, it is so hot for you to ride down to Waco in the daytime, I have arranged for us to start after midnight. The moon will be up, and it will be cool and nice for you. Lie down and sleep. I am going to sit out here and will waken you in time."

No anger, no reproach, only continued thought for her, and the sound of unshed tears in his voice. Yet she was going away to leave him lonely and desolate, doubly desolate, for having had her with him. Suddenly the thought came, she might never see him again. She had not meant that.

The better, the nobler part of the woman's nature was rising and getting mastery. Her selfishness, her

homesickness, everything in conflict with her love for Charley was being pushed aside. How could she forget all he had endured so uncomplainingly. Had his life been on a bed of roses? How could she go away and disregard her vows at God's altar, her bond to her husband, which nothing but death could dissolve. Here was her home, here whether pleasant or not, was her duty, here her husband. With quick sweeping movement she was out of the room and beside Charley, who was sitting with bowed head and breaking heart, on the little porch. "Charley," said the clear, sweet voice of the woman, "I am not going back to Georgia. Your work is my work, your life my life; just forgive and love me, Charley. That's all I want. I will be a woman. I will stand by your side, Charley, a loving, loyal wife."

And she stood by him till his broad acres brought thousands of dollars from harvest fields. She stood by him till the log cabin on the Brazos was supplanted by a mansion of many rooms. She stood by him till children grew up to noble manhood, and now Charley Campbell is old, and bent, and gray, "but friends and feller citizens, she's a-standin' by him yit."

THE SALOON THAT DIDN'T STAY.

THE village of S——— in western Texas had never tolerated a saloon. For many years it had been a local option town. Peace, quiet, and long freedom from a whisky element, at last made the good people negligent and over confident, and when a demand was made for a new vote in the county on local option by an element which almost unknown to the citizens had crept into the community, the city fathers and brothers felt little or no uneasiness about the status of S———.

"The town had always been for temperance and no one would ever think of trying to put up a saloon there, anyway." So the good people "slept on their oars," and before they realized what had happened, the vote of the antis overwhelmed them. The village of S——— with all other towns was declared "wet," and the man with saloon had come. Before their astonished eyes he was unloading his stores, and opening up his "grog" in a little corner store. Groups of indignant men gathered

near and protested with him, pleaded with him, and abused him in strong language. He shrugged his broad shoulders and proceeded with his work. The young boys gathered curiously around, drawn by the novel sight of whisky barrels and beer kegs. To them it was almost equivalent to a small circus, for the appliances of the whisky trade were almost unknown in this strictly temperance town.

Still, even with this man and his goods in their midst, the citizens did not believe it possible that he would stay in the face of earnest exhortation, and the force of public opinion. But their words fell unheeded, their disapproval was unnoticed, and the saloon man claiming his legal right to proceed, went on opening up barrels and putting in fixtures.

A mass meeting of the citizens was called to give more elaborate denunciation against the establishment of this wretched traffic in the town of S———. Several prominent men invited the saloon keeper to be present and see for himself how bitterly opposed the whole community was to having whisky sold there. He readily agreed to go but said he would decide the question from his own standpoint and not that of other men.

The public hall was filled with citizens of the town

and neighborhood, and after several talks from earnest men the chairman of the meeting asked all who were opposed to having a saloon in S——— to rise to their feet. Every man, woman and child stood up, save the one whose interest lay in whisky. From that meeting he returned to his quarters and undaunted and uninfluenced went on determinately arranging his decanters and bottles, and putting up that most fearful of sign boards in any community—Saloon. He had the lawful right to do it, and who could stop him? For some time in the village of S———there had been a small band of mothers, about six little women—gentle little women—simple little women, only of strength through their goodness, only of power through their pure christian lives. They met weekly in a mother's prayer-meeting.

The saloon was putting on business airs next day as they took their usual way to the house of prayer. They had to pass immediately by its repugnant doors. Every motherly face grew hot with indignation, and they entered the room for prayer with expression and attitude more fitted for war than for quiet supplication. Each of these mothers had precious boys to raise. A boy to raise. What a wealth of possibilities lies in those few

words. A boy—a man—a ruler of men—a prince perhaps, who knows, among his fellow men.

The future stretches out a wonderful perspective along the highway of a boy's life. Each mother's work was at stake. All she hoped for, all she toiled for, all she lived for was threatened by the establishment of this dangerous influence entering the little town. It must be stopped, it must be outwitted.

Did you ever watch an earnest mother with one hand on God's promises and the other at work? Did you ever know her to fail?

What must be done about the saloon, was the first question at the mothers' meeting that afternoon. Every means so far had failed to stop its progress, and the hour of prayer was devoted to the discussion of the intrusion. Many things were suggested, some aggressive and of course impracticable, others unequal, seemingly, to the strength of purpose in the owner of the business, so bitterly resented by these earnest women.

Hopelessness seemed at last to shadow even the walls of the room. Six sad-eyed mothers gazed into each other's faces for one ray of hope. Must they stand aside and let this tempter enter the community and brazenly offer the maddening cup to their boys, and those of

their neighbors? It seemed indeed a hopeless case. "Let us pray," tremblingly and with sweet womanly earnestness, came from the lips of Sister Moore. In profound silence six loyal, loving mothers knelt down. Not a word was spoken. In solemn quiet, each heart lifted the burden to that God and Father who letteth not a "sparrow fall unnoticed and watcheth the lillies of the field." When they rose to their feet each one knew as she looked into each other's face, that they were pledged even if life was at stake, to stand for the purity of the little town, and that the saloon must go. How, and by what means God would surely direct them. There was a long pause; Sister Lee stood up. Every eye turned toward her when with low, earnest voice she said: "I have a plan, if we have only courage to stand up to it, which will break up the saloon. We can not do rash things and unlawful things. The man has a legal right to put up a business here, but we can make his sales mighty light. There are six of us mothers, all old married women, well known in the community. We will divide into sets of two. We will go two at a time from daylight till midnight; take our knitting and work and quietly sit in the saloon. There won't be a man or boy in S——— come in and buy whisky while

we are there. If we are brave and resolute mothers we can stand this longer than the saloon man can. Let us ask God to give us strength. If the man swears, or gets in toughs or loafers, don't scare. Sisters, an oath isn't pleasant to hear but it can't hurt us. I will be one to go on duty at daylight tomorrow; who will go with me?

Up rose a little dark eyed woman: "I will go with you Sister Lee."

She had two noble, gifted boys. She would have given her heart's blood, drop by drop, to help them develop into perfect manhood.

Should she quail before one danger? Then began a regular old Methodist hand-shaking, and in the good old way fast passing out, these dear old mothers all got happy.

The modern woman who tampers in many ways with dangerous things, who quaffs daily and nightly her nectars and punches and fashionably concocted intoxicants, would have laughed to scorn, perhaps, those glad old sisters as they shook each other's hands and cried in joy over the victory they felt within their grasp.

They knew just how the soldier feels the night before such battles as San Juan, for it was a brave resolve for six little women to take.

"I don't think the saloon man can stand us long," said gentle Sister Davis, her soft brown hair catching the last rays of the evening sun. Her sweet lips trembled but there was no fear in her eye. Yet, it would not be a light thing to do; it would not be a pleasant thing to do, but every earnest mother has a vocation for martyrdom, and they were ready to do their duty. Very plain women were they, old-fashioned women, who sanctified their own hearthstones and prayed to make their children ornaments to their nation, and a crown of glory to their race, and the angels were very near those hearts who kept the light on the watch towers burning, for the safety of their altars and their homes.

"Damn the women," said the saloon man next morning when the first installment of mothers appeared at his place of business and told him of their intentions. That evening the saloon had closed its doors! By next day it had

> "Folded its tent like the Arab
> And silently stole away."

These six little mothers couldn't have conducted a meeting according to rule, but they put the power of their womanhood against the whisky traffic and it fled.

A CHRISTMAS IN TEXAS.

THE plantation, "Hope Estate," with its acres and acres of rich "black land," lay cozily outspread along a bend in the picturesque Brazos river.

A broad avenue led up from the big gate at the public road to one of those old, rambling, delightfully comfortable homes of the South in the "ante bellum" days. A gallery as wide as many modern rooms, and running the whole length of the front, was furnished with lounges, cots, hammocks, and easy chairs. The comfort and delight of days and nights spent out on a Southern gallery can hardly be estimated by one who has never known the warmth and balmy loveliness of our Texas clime. The yard was so beautiful.

Oliver Wendell Holmes says the "Elm comes nearer having a soul than any other vegetable creature." Some one else says, "All lands are soulless where the olive does not lift its sacred head;" but a lawn covered with the spreading live oak, magnolia, and with roses blooming also, in December, can hardly be surpassed.

This sunny plantation on the majestic Brazos was very busy and very merry just now, for Christmas was at hand.

Christmas can never be more delightful anywhere than it was "down South" before "de wah."

To no one did it bring more fun and frolic than to the negro. Really the customs and festivities of that season seemed to bear more relation to the slave than the master. Christmas week was one round of quiltings, parties, and marriages at the "Quarter."

At this plantation home, during the coming holidays, was to be celebrated the union of two of the house servants, Tom and Lottie. Tom had been a late addition to the "Hope Estate," purchased in New Orleans, and only just established a few months in his exalted position as a carriage driver. He was finely built, and his good humored black face, the fine manners he had acquired during his life in the city, as well as his "store clothes," raised him considerably above the social line of the common field hands.

The negro is ever an aristocrat if he has only half a chance to show it.

Tom held himself quite aloof from the "quarter niggers," but the bright, trim, coquettish dining room

girl, Lottie, soon brought him an humble worshiper at her dark shrine.

She caught the art of dressing prettily from her young mistresses, at whose toilet she daily assisted, and from whom she constantly received gifts of laces, ribbons, hats and dresses.

Whether it was Lottie's fine appearance in these pretty clothes that captured Tom's heart, or the many nice dishes of good things her position enabled her to put away for him, who can say. Certain it was, though, she led him captive at her will, and the wedding was set for Christmas eve.

It was determined by the white family that this wedding should be particularly fine, so the costumes of the black couple were devised by the kind master and mistress. A good second hand broadcloth suit was obtained for Tom, and he was given a pass to the neighboring village to select his own tie and white gloves. The young mistress presented Lottie with one of her own pretty ball dresses, and also a wreath of white flowers. Some fine lace curtains made a very respectable bridal veil.

Nothing pleased a negro in the days of slavery better than "finery" from the white folks, and few brides were

more thoroughly delighted than Lottie. Not so much at the prospects of a husband, as with the anticipated pleasure of shining before the whole plantation of more than one hundred negroes in such gorgeous raiment.

Are there not many brides in much higher circles, who approach the threshold of married life with no more exalted idea of womanhood and happiness. The trousseau, the "eclat," the bridal presents, are all that fill their desires, and the husband is merely taken in consideration as a necessary element to give opportunity for all the commotion.

Lottie and Tom were at all events very happy, and were neither of them given to analyzing motives.

The long and roomy nursery of the "quarter" was selected as the place for the ceremony, so it was swept and decorated with holly and mistletoe, and Tom and Lottie were thoroughly lectured about their manners and attitudes.

The eventful night came.

Lottie's dress was carefully placed on her by her young mistress, and Tom was well groomed by the kind master. A number of slaves from the neighboring plantations had been invited, and when the white family conducted the bridal pair to the "quarter" they found

the gallery, the long nursery rooms, and even the windows crowded with shining black faces.

The bride and groom were instructed to enter at the lower door and walk the whole length of the rooms through the staring throng to the end of the building, and there to stand for the ceremony to be said.

The negroes were seldom married by a clergyman. The master generally attended to the tying of all matrimonial knots.

Lottie and Tom, fully conscious of their own magnificence, marched with regal air through the open space made for them, on, and on, to the end of the room.

The master stepped out to perform his part, when, lo and behold—the couple stood with their backs to the man about to make them one flesh forever.

They had forgotten to turn around. What so confused them, how they had so misinterpreted all directions none could tell, but there they stood with faces toward the wall.

A dreadful pause ensued.

The white folks whispered, made signs, but naught availed anything.

At last one of the children was sent to turn them

around, but in doing so the bride was brought on the wrong side of the groom. Despairing of getting them entirely right, the ceremony proceeded and the black couple were launched upon the sea of matrimony, on the wrong side of each other.

Alas, how many thousands begin and end the trip in like manner.

Chapter II.

The wedding was over.

The big quilting was through.

The night at the "quarter" was to be spent in revelry.

The moon looked down on the crude plays of "Africa" as graciously as she did upon "My lady's" grand ball.

No cold weather had reached sunny Texas, and the air was soft as that of Italy.

The good master and mistress of "Hope Estate" had arranged a table out on the long gallery of the nursery. They had loaded it with meats, chicken, turkey, bread, cake and pies.

Big and little nigs, old and young, black and yellow,

field hands and house servants, gathered 'round this festal board with the complete abandon to happiness so peculiar to the negro.

Well filled at last with food, they entered in couples the nursery, and began their childish games. There was "Shoot the Buffalo," "Fishing," "Steal Partners," "In My Lady's Garden," and others as original.

The white folks sat grouped near the fireplace, merry and welcome spectators. Over and over the low monotones were sung and the plays repeated, till seemingly tired, the negroes paused to rest.

"Why don't you dance some?" said the master.

"Dey's too much 'ligion in dis crowd to dance, Massa Tom; Uncle Ike's done had so many prayer meetin's, dey's too pious, sah," spoke out a jolly looking young darkey, who knew his master's views on the subject.

Colonel Carter was a good master. His slaves were well fed, well clothed, well housed.

They had care and comfort many poor whites would be thankful for, but he was a rigid disciplinarian. Besides, some of the "preachers" who had visited the plantation had proved to be "wolves in sheep's clothing," and he didn't think the religious element of the negro needed any more of their cultivation.

In a moment of vexation he had prohibited any more "meetin's" and prayer "meetin's." So his fine face darkened and a look of displeasure gathered there, as he gave a quick, hard glance toward an aged negro man sitting meekly in the opposite corner.

"Come out of there, Isaac," Colonel Carter said abruptly.

The old man rose slowly and walked forward, his whole manner expressive of naught but submission.

"So," said the master, "You've been praying again, have you?"

"Yes, Massa," slowly replied old Isaac.

The negroes began to move back with fear on all their faces.

The countenance of the mistress and white children took on a look of pain.

The children loved "Uncle Isaac."

For years he had been exempted from regular labor, and in all their pecan gatherings, their hunts for persimmons and 'possum, it was old Uncle Isaac who was their faithful guide and companion. He it was who knew when the perch and trout were biting in the river, and who dug the bait for them. Then, best of all, it was Uncle Isaac and old Mammy Mary, his wife, who

would cook their fish so "good and brown;" and with the delicious hot corn bread, what meals they had eaten in her clean cabin. Then, after Mammy Mary had put away everything, they sat around the hearth and listened to the old darkies' tales of "ghosties and haints," till, with chills creeping up their spines, they would fly to the house, trembling with fear, but captivated still.

Yes, they loved their gray companion, Old Isaac, and they knew that, although a kind master, their father always punished disobedience very quickly and sharply.

There was a hush of fear within the nursery.

Colonel Carter's face was dark and stern, as he said in tones heard by every listener:

"Well, sir, since you can pray so well, let's see how you can dance."

By the negro who is "pious" hardly anything is believed to be more wicked than dancing. Old Isaac would almost as soon have obeyed his master had he ordered him to murder some one, so a distressed look spread over his black face, as he solemnly replied:

"Massa Tom, you know I'se done jined de church, sah, long time ago, and I can't dance, sah!"

"Dance, you black scoundrel, or I'll make you," thundered Colonel Carter.

The knowledge that his orders on the plantation had been ignored, and the apparent intention of Isaac not to obey his request in the presence of all his slaves, roused his passionate nature to a fury, and as he stepped forward the cowering groups of blacks shrank back closer and closer into the sheltering corners of the room.

The two principals in the scene stood alone in the middle of the floor—the master and the slave.

One with power to crush, to conquer, to annihilate, if he chose—the other with naught to save him from the fury of his owner but the God he tried in his benighted way to serve.

The two men were about the same age. Colonel Carter was a fine, handsome, strongly built type of the Southern planter.

Uncle Isaac was bent and aged, and his wool was white as snow.

With his head meekly bowed, he leaned heavily on his knotty walking stick.

Could Colonel Carter strike one so humble, so feeble looking, and the playmate of his boyhood; for he and

Uncle Isaac were boys together on the old plantation. Many hearts in that nursery room beat with rapid pulsations, as old Isaac, in a low but calm and deliberate voice said:

"Massa Tom, I'll do any'ting else you tells me to, sah, but I can't dance, Massa Tom. Don't ax me to, please, sah."

Could anything save him now?

The silence of death was in the nursery. Some angel of mercy, tenderly stooping must have touched the master with her quivering wings; or was it the strong tide of manly impulses, which, returning, swept back the baser passion from his heart.

No noble man can be unmoved by heroism, even in a slave.

Colonel Carter stepped backward—a deep flush overspreading his manly face, as he said hastily: "Well, if you won't dance, let's hear you pray."

I can not recall all the words of that prayer, but I have never heard one which thrilled me so, or seemed so full of the forgiving love, faith in a listening Heavenly Father, and so beautiful in moral heroism.

Kneeling on the puncheon floor where he stood, Old Isaac began in low and trembling tone.

With childish simplicity he told the Lord he was trying to be a Christian, and wanted to go to Glory, and "de good Lawd knowed he couldn't dance, but he'd pray for Massa Tom." Oh, yes, he "lubbed to pray for Massa Tom."

"You knows, deah Lawd, I does dat ebery day," he continued, his voice rising to a clear brave tone. "You knows, deah Lawd, we was boys togedder, me an' Massa Tom, an' I lubs him; but deah Lawd, he ain't a Christian. Oh, good Lawd, make him 'fess his sins an' be on de Lawd's side.

"Ole Massa, when he died, said, 'Isaac, you belongs to your Massa Tom, an' you mus' allus lub him, an' take care ob him,' an' I'se allus done it, deah Lawd. Make him lub de true 'ligion. We'se done bin boys togeddah.

"Oh, Lawd, let us be in hebin togeddah too."

Without one word Colonel Carter walked across the puncheon floor to where old Isaac still knelt, and laid his strong hand tenderly as a woman's upon the bowed grey head of his old slave, so faithful to the God he worshipped, so lovingly loyal to himself.

Then he left the room.

A STORY OF RELAND.

THE fine old Irish estate of the Braziers was beautifully situated in the county of Wicklow. The level fields, green even in winter, now seemed perfection of color in the June sun. The moist west winds had stimulated the emerald turf into velvet loveliness on the sloping land leading down to the barrow.

On the east the flatness of the country was relieved by the straggling range of Wicklow Mountains.

The sun in its westward course was nearing the close of day, and lightly touched upon the glossy coats of two horses trotting slowly along the road, bringing their riders, a gentleman and a lady down to the lodge gate.

Conrad Brazier looked happily into the face of the girl riding beside him, for she was his betrothed, and he had been proudly showing her the interesting points of the estate to which he, as eldest son, would fall heir. Conrad Brazier, though fully conscious of the beauties of his ancestral home, had spent little of his early manhood in Ireland.

English schools, the Continent, London, Paris, anywhere except Ireland, had claimed his attention. With his widowed mother, his brothers and sisters, he had followed the disastrous fashion of living abroad, leaving his tenantry, almost strangers, to the mercy of agents. The needs of the poor laborers, their struggles and failures, the wrongs inflicted upon them, the sympathetic touch his presence might create were all unknown, evaded and lost for the more exciting life abroad. One of poor Ireland's curses has been the continued absence of her landlords.

The Braziers were making one of their short visits to their beautiful Irish estate, and the fair, aristocratic Elenor Windham, prospective bride of the oldest son, Conrad, was a guest of his sister.

The pleasure of this evening ride and the companionship of his beautiful fiance, had relieved Conrad Brazier's hard, proud face of some of its habitual severity. Naturally stern and masterful, accustomed to obedience from even the members of his own family, he showed always the stern side of his nature to the tenantry who served him, and thought of the peasantry as simple tools, implements by which his rentals came.

He regarded the people upon his estate much as he

did the beasts of burden that worked and plowed by their side. The tradition of class was educated into his inmost soul. The tenantry feared him, and he never stretched out a kindly hand to make a stronger tie between them and himself than that of serf and master.

About the time of this story the Irish peasants had been inoculated with a desire for righting many wrongs. They were beginning to feel intense revolt against the lack of sympathetic, just consideration and protection on the part of the landlords, and the spirit of rebellion against serfdom, which every man with soul in him must have, was commencing to pulse through this hitherto cowed and humble people.

Conrad and Miss Windham moving along slowly, chatting merrily, reached the lodge gate opening into the park. By some accident no one appeared to open it.

A ragged, dejected-looking peasant was passing in a sullen manner down the hedge close by. Conrad Brazier, master, did not even know his name.

"Here, sirrah, open this gate," Conrad said, harshly, irritated by the fact that some one had neglected a duty. The man did not seem to hear.

"You scoundrel, open this gate," shouted the master.

The tenant moved slowly and sullenly forward, muttering something as he passed close to the riders.

"You dog! what are you growling about?" said Conrad Brazier, and reaching forward, he struck the peasant full on the face and across the bared breast with his heavy riding whip. A quiver of pain and a scowl of rage passed over the face of the poor creature. Quickly recovering himself, he looked straight at the proud heir of the Braziers, and said, in a clear, sharp tone:

"I've a dacint name as well as yer honor, an' I'll move sooner for a civil ward than an ill one."

"Oh, the insolent wretch," cried the shocked and haughty Elenor. "Punish him! Punish him!"

But the harsh, passionate heir of the estate needed no prompting spirit of pitiless woman to rouse him. For a second the monstrous audacity and unexpected daring of the man was like a rude shock to Conrad; then, white and furious, he turned and spurred his powerful horse full upon the unarmed tenant. Up and down Conrad Brazier drove his blooded beast, endeavoring to ride over, crush and kill the man, now frightened and fleeing before the raging master.

The beautiful Elenor sat by, looking on with excited face and heightened color, but without one word of pity or petition of mercy for the poor being in his race for life. The man would certainly have been trodden under foot, but the fiery horse, becoming unmanageable, plunged madly away, and for the time Conrad lost entire control of him. The poor peasant, taking advantage of this, clambered over the hedge and quickly was lost from view.

When, mad with rage, the master reached the house he sent for his steward and ordered that this "wretch" and all his family should be evicted from the estate before morning.

Homeless, friendless, well aware that no one in the community would receive them, turned adrift from the home of their forefathers, the man, wife, and children went out into a bitter desolation, that was lightened by no hope.

One country alone held out her arms to the homeless, the degraded, the wretched wanderer—America—name to conjure by; but could they ever reach her wonderful shore?

Chapter II.

"In America one can forget," said Elenor to herself, as she stood on deck of the ocean liner, with her husband, Dr. Warren, watching the last lines of the Emerald Isle fade out of sight.

She was older, paler, sadder than on that bright June evening, when she rode so joyously with Conrad Brazier down to the lodge gate. Hasty words, violent tempers, and unforgiving natures had separated them. Misfortunes had come in many forms to Elenor's family. Circumstances had married her to Dr. Warren, and they were going to America, the land where everything would be new and hopeful.

They followed the tide of human freight to the far West and settled in a little town on the frontier, to build up with the community.

What the country doctor endured in these pioneer days could hardly be told in one story. Dr. Warren broke down under the fearful strain, and the time came when the once proud Elenor found herself a dependent widow and her children fatherless. The terror of immediate need came upon her. Rapidly, day by day, she saw her supplies and money grow less. Fearfully she

looked at the grim situation, hardly believing it possible that such fate should be her portion.

Searching for some present relief, she thought of the many uncollected bills due her husband out in the country. When she remembered the bitter nights in which he had often gone, and his long, weary rides, the childish hope that persons owing for such service would gladly pay in provisions, if not in money, nerved her to attempt driving out in the settlement near by to make collections.

Borrowing a horse and buggy, she took her three little children and started out over unknown roads and through a sparsely settled country. After a weary day and poor success, Mrs. Warren, late in the afternoon, turned toward home, thoroughly discouraged and almost hopeless.

Suddenly clouds gathered, thunder came nearer and nearer, and one of those terrific storms known to the West overtook the travelers. The lightning was fearful, the angry wind swept the treetops hither and thither, flinging broken limbs around them.

The horse, terrified by crashing sounds, became frightened and plunged from side to side. The children

cowered and screamed with fear, and the rain beat upon their unprotected heads.

"What shall I do?" cried the bewildered and heart-sick mother. Then, just ahead, she saw a little clearing by the roadside and in it a small, but comfortable looking log cabin.

"Surely," said the woman, "no one will refuse us shelter on such a night."

Never did sight of an elegant mansion rejoice her eye like this humble home, with its possibilities for protection. With great difficulty Mrs. Warren succeeded in getting the excited horse up to the house, and holding him still a minute, called piteously to the occupants within.

The door was opened by an elderly man, rough and poor in appearance, but seeing the situation at a glance, he came quickly out in the rain, took the wet group into the house and securely tied the horse under shelter. The man and his family helped the children and Elenor take off their wet wrappings, gave them their own dry clothing, made a warm fire and did all in their power to relieve and comfort them.

With an eagerness that deeply touched Mrs. Warren, the wife hastened to prepare some food and a cup

of tea. It was all poor and plain, but the kindness, the gratification the humble woman seemed to feel in placing it before her guest, was the best seasoning, the sweetest sauce.

The night settled down in gloom and darkness. The storm raged and beat and struck against the house. Very thankful was Elenor Warren for protection from its terror and power.

Sitting around the blazing fire, the man began to be quite talkative, and Elenor feared the flush on his face indicated the influence of liquor, which suspicion was confirmed by seeing him go to a black-looking bottle upon a shelf near by.

The family betrayed their nationality by their Irish brogue, and to keep the conversation going, Mrs. Warren said: "You are from Ireland, I perceive. Where were you born?"

"In County Wicklow," answered the man.

Without much real interest in the matter, Elenor Warren asked, "On whose estate did you live?"

The man's whole deportment underwent a sudden and violent change. Springing from his chair, a hot flush overspread his face, his eye took on a brutal gleam, his hands clenched with angry motion, and he

said in a loud, coarse voice, "Conrad Brazier's, curse his black soul."

His lips pronounced the name as if it blistered them in passing. The wife moved timidly towards the passionate man, but with a volley of oaths fearful to hear, he thrust her aside. Reaching for the black bottle, he poured the burning contents down his throat, while words of hate and demoniac curses made Elenor and her little ones shiver in wretched fear.

The woman came close to her and whispered, "Niver fear, alana, its only that name that puts the divil in him, an' he'll niver harm ye."

The raving man denounced Conrad Brazier as a cruel-hearted tyrant, who ground his tenantry under his heel by poverty and starvation. Wilder and wilder grew his rage, as he told how this proud landlord had tried one day to ride him down, crush him, kill him, for only wishing to be spoken to as a man, and "his swateheart, divil take her proud face, looked on and thought it was all right and fair. Och thin, I wisht I was near her now. Begorra, I'd put a different look in her bright eyes and a quare color on her red lips. She towld him to punish me, and dhrive meself and childer out of the home me father lived an' died in. Faith, an'

I pray the houly Virgin, she may be without shelter this night."

So he raved, and the "sweetheart of Conrad Brazier" listened, with overwhelming humiliation, listened with sorrow and conviction, listened trembling in every limb, sheltered at the hearthstone of the very peasant who had received the cruel blow at the lodge gate back in old Ireland.

The red had long been gone from Elenor's lips and the light from her bright, dark eyes. Suffering and privation had altered her every feature, yet the woman shivered with intense fear lest by any look or word she should betray to the man, maddened by liquor and passionate rage, her connection with a scene which, in the far West of America, with the setting of the storm and darkness without, and terror within, appeared in light and color so different from that of the June day at the ancestral home of the Braziers.

THE WOMAN WITH THE HOE—IN TEXAS.

THEY began married life in the ordinary way and with about the usual preparation. He owned a little farm in Texas and some other property. He was a good-looking young fellow, an average man from whom one might expect some work.

She was a pretty well raised girl and also possessed a little inheritance. She gave up father and mother and with Ruth-like devotion, saying, "whither thou goest, there will I go also, thy people shall be my people and thy God my God," left her o'd life all behind her and joyously went with her husband to their little western farm near the town of S——.

Western agriculture is as uncertain and varying as its mirages, those wonderful frauds of sky and air. You think you see tall trees in the distance but on near approach find only weeds. The farmer each year sees in the outlook of his future good crops, but when at harvest his hand reaches for fruition, he finds often less than weeds. It takes supreme judgment, complete self-

abnegation and untiring energy to be a successful producer on western farms. Earl Ransom toiled, but he was a bad manager. His crop was always a little late. It never "hit the season." Things always went wrong.

The years of drouth set in which seemed determined to break up all western population. Crop after crop failed. Weak men, and many brave ones, too, went down. Only pure, unadulterated grit stood.

Earl became utterly discouraged. He had inherited dyspepsia and melancholia. He was a trifle indolent, and a good deal selfish. He always counted the cost and the chance of failure, while another man would make a dash in and win. He had not the "splendid audacity" to grasp a passing opportunity but "figured" on it till the chance was gone to the braver man. Children came to his home but dollars and cents did not.

He tired soon of farming.

He traded and trafficked. It was easier than work, but he was a failure everywhere. He sold and got through with everything belonging to them save the little farm on which they lived, and after awhile the time came when they had nothing but corn meal and water for food.

"We are almost without clothes, too," said Mary.

"Yes, and without money or credit," answered Earl, gloomily. "I am tired of it all, worn out with the struggle. I never have any luck. Everything goes wrong with me."

The woman tried to say a cheery word, yet her heart sank as she looked out on the parched fields, the half fed stock, the lack of thrift everywhere. The wheat, oats and corn were failures. What would they subsist upon until another crop could be made?

Earl Ransom became a despairing coward. He could not face the "wreck of matters" with which he had strewn their pathway, but he was willing to leave his wife to meet the desperate prospect alone.

Let us pass over the suicide. He laid down his hoe in the middle of the row and left the puny arm of a woman the work he had so far failed to accomplish.

Over his lifeless body Mary Ransom shed bitter tears, but they were not altogether tears of sorrow. There was outraged confidence and bitter contempt. No wife and mother can respect a man who relieves himself by suicide, of his position as bread-winner.

The poor have little time to dally with grief.

The neighbors came in and helped to lay the body in its quiet grave, and Earl Ransom at least rested from his shovel and hoe.

When the widow took an inventory of her "ways and means" of living she found some chickens, a blind horse, and a plow were her stock in trade. She asked for no help. She uttered no cry. The children must have food and she bent her shoulders to the burden. For days they lived on nothing but corn "dodgers." She dreamed of coffee and meat, but for weeks, even months, dared not indulge in such luxuries. They saved every egg to sell in town.

Soon it became time to prepare the ground for the next year's crop. She patched up enought gear to hold Old Sam to the plow. Her oldest boy, Teddie, led the horse, and she guided the plow. Day after day she toiled thus with bitter agony at heart, but no cry aloud. Sometimes she even sang. Just think of it! A woman singing at the plow handle! She sang bright, rollicky songs to cheer her little Ted, leading Old Sam. Often he joined in with his boyish treble, and they sang to the end of the row, then laughing, dropping upon the grass to rest.

But the crop this brave heart was preparing to plant

would not supply present needs. She had mouths to feed in the merciless present. She looked around for something to do immediately, no matter how humble, how coarse the labor, provided it brought instant financial relief.

There were many young men on the ranches near around. She went to see them and asked to do their washing. Their surprise at her request changed to profound respect when she brought their soiled garments to them well laundered.

Her business grew.

Every morning and in the cool of the afternoon this tender woman and her sturdy boys plowed and toiled in the field. In the middle of the day they went to the wash tub, and night after night, when this mother had read and sung these precious boys and girls to sleep, she worked till the "wee sma' hours" doing the ironing.

She didn't howl and wail about it. She didn't ask if she was the "thing God made and gave" into this world to be loved and provided for, but she hoed her row, and ploughed her furrow, and bore her burden with the pluck of a hero.

How could she endure so much?

We don't know.

No one can calculate the wonderful power in one weak woman when the lives and necessities of her loved ones are the incentive and inspiration.

The weary, weary drudgery—the frightful thought of failing at times almost overcame her, but there is in woman, even more than in man, a pride in great efforts, a glorious joy in victory, and the triumph of overcoming the curse of poverty, and putting its wretchedness under foot is, to her, magnificent.

"Plato and the swing of Pleadies" were nothing to this bread winner. She did not ask to "sink into the dust of things," but, with Ajax, only prayed "for light to see her foeman's face," and strove to labor with practical good sense for the children round her knee, and, if God "tempers the storm to the shorn lamb," He will not forsake such a mother.

She became the provident woman Solomon tells us about. She knew the winter days would come ere long, and every week she managed to find time to go with Old Sam hitched to the cart, and with her children's help gathered up good loads of wood from the timber bottom, then free to all. Her wood pile grew a sight to behold.

She was a praying woman.

However, she did not pray and "straightway send her bill, expecting heaven to tend her mill," but she greased the wheels and mended the rents and sent the Lord her petition from the plow handles and the wash tub, and He heard and blessed her.

In washing she noticed many garments needed mending and she began patching and darning and the men in honest kindness paid her willingly and well. Then she cleaned up her old machine and gradually began making new garments. She did her work faithfully and carefully and her business increased.

She ventured at last to make some dresses for the women in the neighborhood and developed a long dormant talent for cutting and fitting. Her reputation spread and she now saw the way for paying a grown hand to work in the field.

It is not worth while relating how the men in the neighborhood, admiring her pluck and independent industry were kind and helpful during harvest times.

Dame fortune does smile often upon the brave heart. Wheat was better than usual and sold at a good price and our "woman with the hoe" soon had enough money ahead to assure her at least against starvation.

"It is a long road that has no turn," though it takes great endurance to wait for it.

Seed time and harvests came and went, and the mother was known for her thrift and good judgment.

"Mother," said Ted one day, "can we ever go to school?"

The question brought the education of her children earnestly before her. One moment of thought, and she answered her boy's craving for knowledge.

"Yes, son, you shall all go to school, and that soon."

"How, where, when?" cried her bewildered brain, but a woman's faith and a woman's courage answered, "there shall come a way."

She went immediately into town, saw a number of ladies who promised work, and rented a small cottage, hired a good man to make her crop, and moving immediately, started the education of her children.

The "man with the hoe" would, perhaps, have refused to risk such a venture, but the "woman with the hoe" made the "bold stroke in the dark," and though often in

> "The midnight, still and murk,
> She stitched her life blood in the work,"

she did not falter and she did not fail.

Her business grew and increased until she had built up a flourishing establishment and employed several assistants. She did not pray for "the God of ages to dispel the dream," "fold the worn hands and close the sinking lids," or call for "Death, with all its hushing wings." She stitched and stitched and "life's golden curtains" were torn for her with many a rent. "Her glad youth went," but there was no "bitter milk in a wintry breast," no taint of "anarchy whose pit is hell," no "dead face plashing in the river reeds," but after awhile, a gray haired, quiet little woman with a soft, glad smile on her earnest face, calmly, thankfully, joyously treading the shady paths of coming age, while busy, prosperous children, now men and women, were round her daily and called her blessed.

THE TEACHER OF THE LOG SCHOOLHOUSE.

He left her when the down upon his lips
Lay like the shadows of a hovering kiss.

HE was so young. He had just graduated at college. He had his diploma; he had health, energy and ambition; and what often proves God's great blessing to a man, an *empty purse.*

He had to get to work immediately. He did not want to teach. It was not his chosen profession, but a country school was offered him, and it opened up at least an immediate chance to replenish his depleted money department. By such needs is the fate of life often decided.

He could not understand why he had been forced to eat this bread of bitterness; he could not see why he must struggle with a whelming wave while others skimmed lightly on top of smooth seas. He could not know in his early life, that often when God wants to bring out the best in a man, "He sends him into a wilderness awhile," or that a backwoods school in Texas, was equally good training ground, but he conquered

himself for duty's sake although the fight was against habit, taste, and desire.

You will not call him a hero. Oh no.—There was no clash of arms, no beat of drums, no bugle blast to announce his battle with his own ambitions, repulsions, and stern necessity. Yet the combat was fierce, the struggle violent, but he gained a mastery over self, and said triumphantly, "Whatsoever my hand finds to do, I *will* do, and with all my might."

It was so hard to leave home. Mother's face looked so patient, so tenderly kind when we are leaving her, and she was so brave. The old home seemed conscious of the coming change. The rooms reached out their comfortable walls as if to still enfold him. The windows blinked and smiled brightly at him. The hearth fire seemed to flash out a petition to longer sit by its comforting blaze.

How we dread to think of the first night alone, with only strange faces and unknown humanity around us. But he was a *manly boy.*

He faced the emptiness of his purse, the need of new clothing, the dreary blank at the beginning of his manhood, with the same grit and nerve with which he had

caught hard balls in the base ball game with broken fingers, rather than give up the field.

When time came for school to begin in the "Old Log Schoolhouse," the young master was at his post. It was in the early days of Texas, when the amount of whipping done in the school room was the test of the capacity of the teacher, and when trustees sized up an applicant for the "job of running a three months school," more by the brawn of his arm than the cultivation of his brain. The boys of the "Log Schoolhouse" thought only of testing his physical power, and they entered the building Monday morning ready for the fray.

But the boy teacher had fished, hunted, played base ball, foot ball, "roped yearlings," and his arm was strong, his nerve steady and true. Before the month ended they had felt the strength of his hand, and iron will. Better than all they were assured of kind, courteous treatment upon good behavior.

With the exception of one girl, Mattie Warren, the school was in a state of subjection to the master.

Mattie was utterly incorrigible. She openly defied him. She broke the rules, came late, left early, threw paper wads, wrote notes, she did as she pleased.

The boy teacher reproved her, talked to her, repri-

manded her publicly, tried to appeal to her pride and better nature. Nothing seemed to reach her. He determined to expel her, and called upon the three gray headed old farmers who constituted the "board of trustees."

"You mustn't expel her," said one trustee. "That's just what she wants. Thrash her. Why half the school would be *glad* to be expelled. That would ruin everything, young man."

"Whip her, that's what she's used to. Her own folks can't do nothing with her," said another member of the enlightened board.

Mattie Warren was fourteen. "I can't whip a girl," the young teacher slowly replied with quiet determination in his voice.

"Well, you won't do much teaching this school if you can't thrash the whole outfit, gals as well as boys. Can't have no such foolin' business as expellin' here," was the comforting answer.

The teacher resolved to make one more appeal to the better self of Mattie Warren.

Heretofore when a girl had made herself disagreeable to him, this boy had kept out of her way, and let her severely alone, but this was one girl whom he could not

simply ignore, one girl whose presence in his personality was for the time a fixture. He was so young. Even the wisest man has not always known how to manage a woman, and to this inexperienced, earnest teacher was presented the problem in pinafore, no less difficult because both parties were young.

Hardly a boy in the "Log Schoolhouse" now would have openly defied the darkeyed teacher, but this girl delighted to "play with fire." He made one more earnest appeal to Mattie. He told her she simply could not defy him and remain in school. As his pupil she *must* obey him. She was immovable, and her bright eyes laughed back a bold defiance into his resolute face. What could he do?

It was Friday. He went to the trustees and again insisted on expelling the girl from the school. "Whip her, she must be conquered. It will ruin the whole school," said they.

"I can not strike a girl, I will resign my position first," answered the boy teacher with rising color and flashing eye, and the matter was left for further consideration on Monday.

All night our weary educator tossed on a sleepless bed. What could he do. He resolved to go home and

stay over Sunday. Home—mother—God given refuge to man from the cradle to the grave. When cruel trials come, when strong temptations assail, when the bitter stroke wounds, if a man still has home and a mother, where for one short hour he can recover himself, he is safe.

So the boy teacher thought, if he could rest one night with the shadow of home over him, with the face of mother answering his in tenderness and sympathy, if he could see the courage of her loving eyes one day, he would feel strong again.

Mother had never failed him. She would not fail him now.

He had no conveyance. There were no railroads to his home. He had strong limbs and an iron will. They would take him home. Ten miles in an open buggy with a spanking team does not seem far, but ten miles on foot with a weary brain and aching heart, is long and fearfully lingering.

When he dragged his boyish feet up the walk at home, and stepped in the door his face looked haggard and painful, and an aching dread took hold of the mother's heart, as she welcomed her son.

She knew he was in trouble. A dozen fears passed

through her mind. Could he have given his work for want of grit?

Was he recording his first failure? Or oh, had his hot boyish blood made him strike down some being, some pupil?

What could it be?

But she asked no questions. She must comfort him first.

She drew him a rocking chair by the big old fashioned fireplace.

She took his hat. Caressingly she smoothed back his glossy black hair. She even smilingly told him a lot of town news.

In a few moments a blessedness of home had covered him as with a wing, and he was his own brave self again. "Mother," he said, "they tried to make me whip a girl."

"Well, you wouldn't do that, I know." "No, mother, I wouldn't, but the trustees say I must whip her, or give up my position, and I said I would resign first."

"That was right my boy. You were not raised to strike a woman, even one in miniature. If they insist, give up the school."

"I will, but it means giving up clothes and overcoat

and money for everything." How much misery lies bottled up in these privations for a boy just entering manhood, few can realize without actual experience. Grown people can face life in seedy garments, but the young man must be well groomed, to be at all easy.

"Never mind about overcoat and clothes," and the half formed tear drops made the mother's brave eyes beautifully tender. "Perhaps God will send a mild winter. Stand for the right and trust in Providence."

That was enough; he was her own strong, gallant boy again.

"Lets have some supper, mother, I'm hungry as a wolf."

Refreshed by a hot supper, he went to consult his old professor.

God bless those noble teachers whose hearts follow, and whose interest in a boy continues long after he has left the College walls.

When our boy teacher entered the Old Log Schoolhouse Monday morning his resolution was ironclad, strengthened by mother's and teacher's approval.

The trustees were to meet there after school, and the "Professor" was to give his decision.

"I hope the pupils will try and make this day a

pleasant one, as it may be our last together," the teacher said slowly, when the morning exercises began.

All day there seemed to be a hush upon the little school room.

The toughest boy had learned to honor and like the young man with the dark bright eyes, who though he watched them closely, and *would* be obeyed, treated them as gentlemen.

At noon time a daughter of one of the trustees said:

"I'd be ashamed of myself, if I were you Mattie Warren."

"What have I done to displease you, missey?" was the defiant reply.

The teacher is going to quit our school because you've behaved so the trustees want to make him whip you, and he won't do it, so he's going to resign."

Mattie Warren turned suddenly around and walked to her seat.

The evening wore away.

As the lessons were being ended the three trustees, stern advocates of the whipping process, came in to wait the leisure of the teacher.

The last task was finished and the young teacher stepped down in front of his desk.

Mattie Warren, as if nerved by sudden resolution, rose in her seat.

Perhaps the older pupils will never forget the look of her girlish face as with head proudly erect, and eyes that scintillated with brightness, in a voice clear as a bell, she said:

"Professor, may I speak?"

There was a hush of death in the Old Log Schoolhouse.

"Professor," she said, with a look of daring and truth in her young face, "I've been the worst girl in the school. If you'll forgive me I'll try to be the best."

The childish figure dropped to the seat convulsed with sobs.

There was hardly a dry eye in the Log Schoolhouse.

"By George, you did right, Professor, and I'll stand by you clear through," said one noble trustee.

And our boy teacher?

Well, he didn't resign, and he had won his spurs.

IN THE PANHANDLE.

A TRUE STORY.

THE woman sat at the door of her dugout, on the upper step of the narrow stairs leading down into that peculiar style of domicile now so thoroughly identified with the Panhandle of Texas.

The hot May sun shown over and around her, but the strong wind blew a steady gale, and one gets used to the sun in the Panhandle.

When the woman's work was finished in the dug-out she always came up quickly into the outer world, for hers was not even as comfortable as many in the neighborhood, that were build half above the ground and walled up nicely inside, having also good windows giving light and air.

This dugout was made entirely underground, with only small openings for ventilation. The walls were of dirt, while a few planks roughly laid down answered for a floor. That a woman could live in such an abode, so prison like, is only another proof of that wonderful power of endurance in the sex, which must at times

astonish even the angels who may watch over them. The woman, tired and flushed by work in the hot room below, had the panting, hunted look, one sees in Panhandle animals and insects in the summer, when the sun pours down his rays in burning strength, and you can often find a lizard, snake, and grasshopper huddled close together in the shadow cast by one fencepost.

Out, and beyond the dugout, the scene lying before her gaze was surpassingly lovely. The Panhandle is not all attractive. There are miles and miles of dreary, bald prairie, without a stick of timber large enough to cast a shadow, or of sufficient size to offer resting place to a wandering, weary bird, and one finds acres and acres of scrub mesquite looking like old deserted orchards of stunted fruit trees, which the owners, wearied and worn with the disappointments of western agriculture, might have "pulled" away from and betaken themselves to older portions of the State. This woman's gaze in a sad, unconscious way looked over the valley of Mount Nebo, a beautiful stretch of level prairie, now green with growing wheat and oats, on the occupied sections, and bordered and diversified by the different colored sand hills of the Dry Fork of Red River.

Just the prettiness of these sand hills skirting in graceful undulation on the right of the valley, might have given a touch of joy to a heart less preoccupied. Like the dunes of the ocean they lay in billowy beauty, some bare and white, some covered with a carpet of green, others partaking of the rich red color of the soil, and again softened by the blue gray of the low sage brush. From one end of the horizon to the other nothing obscured the sky from view, and every floating cloud, every delicate change of color, spread unobstructed before her eye, save one spot of dark background made by Mount Nebo. As if to shelter and protect her little home, if so sweet a name should be applied to a "hole in the ground," Mount Nebo rose above her in western beauty and wildness. Mount Nebo's old, bald rugged sides had seen many a gathering of the Indian tribes, had heard the desperate war council held on its bleak summits, had rested for the hour the gloomy warriors, when for the last time they had gazed over the valley, even to the Cap Rock of the Staked Plains, which looked like a blue cloud low in the distance, and sighing they said, "It is all ours no longer."

The old Mount had received the first white surveyors,

and from its wind swept top they could view five counties spread out in primeval beauty before them, and for many years it became for them as it had for the banished tribes, a noted land mark. Old Mount Nebo had no doubt witnessed joy and sorrow often, in the moving procession of life in the West, but never in all the past had any being come to his hovering shadows with attitude and expression of more sadness than the woman who had stepped up out of the darkness and loneliness of her dugout into the dazzling sunshine of this May afternoon.

Her dress and surroundings showed abject poverty,—a poverty that must have been her companion for many, many years.

To her as she looked over the field close by, the passing back and forth of her husband and son plowing and breaking land, and the ripening patch of waving wheat, meant little of hope or comfort. For successive years in the past she had watched a prospect, just as fair, dry up under protracted drouths, and in her discouraged heart she moaned, "What is the use; what is the use?" She sat in the dejected attitude of a person whose enthusiasm was buried in a dead past, and

whose life had nothing in it but the cold mandates of duty.

Her face looked hard and prematurely old, and the winds of the Panhandle, which are no respecters of sex, had browned her skin till its original color and texture could hardly be guessed.

Her hair was grayish, and dry, and frizzley. Gip water had roughened and reddened her hands.

Heine said of a lady friend he met after many years of separation, that "he looked at her hands to see if life had been kind to her," for nothing tells of suffering and hardships more surely than a woman's hands.

She may, when clouds of adversity roll away, brighten up her face, don a pretty garb, and almost look her old self again, but her hands as they lie against the soft fabrics will tell the tale of poverty and labor. So the hands of this woman, with their swollen joints and rough, hard skin, sunburned as an Indian's, told more of her life than even her sombre face.

You would scarcely believe that at eighteen she was a bright-eyed, sunny-faced girl, the daughter of devoted parents, blessed with affluence.

Had she known ought of the bitterness of poverty, the experience would perhaps have made her more

prudent. She was generous, unselfish, impulsive. It is always these girls who sacrifice themselves.

The selfish, cautious, deliberate girl thinks first of what is best for her wonderful self.

So this girl—Mary—met and loved and eloped with a good-looking, easy-going, jolly young man in the neighborhood. He was in every way her inferior. Her devoted parents, knowing the worthlessness of the man, advised, plead with her, and tried to make her realize the danger of this matrimonial venture, but it was the old, old story which will occur again and again till time shall record its last love affair. The heedless girl, the enraged parent, and generally a woman's life linked to poverty, humiliation, and woe for all coming years.

In the passing of a few months Mary found she had "sold her birthright for a mess of pottage only." There can be no disappointment greater than the bitter one which discovers to a woman the utter worthlessness of the man whom she fondly believed perfection, and to whom she has loyally and lovingly given her life's allegiance. Mary's husband managed to make a failure in every undertaking. He lost one position after another. At first she did not realize what this meant,

but as comforts grew few and privations many, she began thinking about the cause. Slowly it dawned upon her that the man for whom she had changed her whole life and habit had not a taste or ambition in common with her own. Every day brought fresh disappointment, and bitter regret. Her husband was not unkind, but his shiftlessness, his indolence, his utter lack of business energy and capacity, began to hurt like blows received.

Her father gave her up entirely. He never mentioned her, never forgave her. He had an element in his nature of dogged endurance, that made no effort to relieve itself of pain or hurt. He suffered from her unfilial disregard, without seemingly a desire to place any balm upon the wound.

Her mother, a loving woman, always an invalid, never rallied from the shock of the girl's wretched marriage.

The second daughter, Alice, kindly and patiently waited on the stricken mother, and the father tenderly nursed his shattered wife, but she failed rapidly, and when the bright June sunshine gladdened the earth with its beauty and warmth, and the roses bloomed and the merry birds sang, the mother lay in her home cold, silent, and *dead.*

Nature does not always array herself in sympathetic harmony with earth's children, as our story-makers would fain make us to believe. She bids the rain fall on the bride, and smiles glad sunshine upon the funeral. So this day when a woman's heart had broken in twain, and sorrow sat on the hearthstone, nature was looking her happiest, and smiling her gladdest.

Into this saddened home, into the twilight of the darkened room, uninvited and unannounced, came the agonized daughter, Mary, who a short year ago had left this mother for the stranger.

She must see once more that loved face. As she moved toward the silent form, she saw her father near, and with hands mutely clasped, stood a moment waiting his recognition.

"*You killed her! Leave* this room"— was all he said; and with heart wounded for all time, she once more fled from home.

That she had brought about the death of her mother became the cry of her soul, not aloud, but in the way that kills, in every lonely hour, in the sleepless midnight hush, came ever the wail in her heart—*Mother, Mother.*

At last the drifting nature of Mary's husband caught

the western fever, and selling everything they possessed he raised money enough to land himself, wife and baby boy which had come to them, in the far away State of Kansas. It always seems easy to begin anew among new people.

So the woman tried to be hopeful and faithful, but the man moved from place to place, took up lands, pre-empted a homestead, gave them up, and his rovings and wanderings became almost like the Bedouins of the desert.

Everywhere he was a failure. She tried bravely at first to bear her part. She cooked, washed, did her best to help, but drouths followed them and grasshoppers overtook them. They often wanted food. Her child even was a means of sorrow only to her. Weakly in body, his mind also seemed blighted, as if the great sorrows and privations she had felt, had in some way benumbed his soul also. Her ever-present thought that this was a deserved punishment, helped to increase the melancholy which settled over her whole life. She had no resources for pleasure in her miserable, impoverished home. She was too intelligent to sit contented—dozing and dipping snuff like some women around her. She who loved books and reading had no

reading matter, no papers, no magazines. She who loved pictures and pretty furnishings of a respectable home, had rough walls and bare floors; not only for the present view, but in all the stretch of the future she knew now that nothing else could come to her. She worked in the field with her husband, wearily and hopelessly, because she had none of those employments so dear to a well-raised woman. Hard work was better than mournful thinking. But long, tedious, friendless days were breaking her.

Because she did not complain, her husband, with his plodding, easy nature, supposed her content.

She never tried to open her sorrows or her desires to him. She knew he could not understand her, so the hidden canker of the old wound and the hopelessness of everything in the woman's heart were eating it away.

The changing, wandering husband at last dragged her through many vicissitudes to the Panhandle of Texas, and here again only failure and hardships met them. Each year, just as their little crop of wheat was nearly ready for reaping, a simoon of hot wind passed over the land, and the grain lay shattered on the ground. She had given up—"the iron had entered her soul."

And to-day, as she sat on the dugout step, every

memory of her old home,—her father, her mother, her sister,—had come to her with renewed freshness and added bitterness. A nice family had moved into the neighborhood near them, and the lady, in womanly kindness, had come over that morning to see her.

This new element in the valley was fresh from the life once so familiar. The lady had talked to her of books and flowers, of society, of the mother who would soon visit them, and a tide of remorseful grief swept with accumulated force over this discouraged woman of the dugout and she wailed alone, "Oh, my Mother. I killed you, and this life is my punishment!"

The weariness, the unavailing repentance, the uselessness of her existence, were never felt more keenly than this afternoon when she sat below old Mount Nebo, in the abandonment of vain regrets, and the deep depression of hopelessness.

Suddenly the sound of wheels near by somewhat startled her, and as she looked hastily around, a lady, tastily and stylishly dressed, stepped out of a buggy and moved quickly toward her. "Excuse me, madame," in the gentle tone and refined accent of culture, the lady said: "I am hunting for a sister of mine, who left home many years ago. For months I have been searching

for her, to visit her, to see her once more. I have traced her husband from Kansas to the Panhandle of Texas. Can you give me any information? Are there any families from Kansas here?"

The Panhandle woman knew her sister Alice in an instant.

Affluence and ease deal lightly with womanly charms. The bright eyes, delicate, well-kept face, the sunny brown hair, the refined bearing, were all little changed.

For a moment the Panhandle woman expected quick recognition of herself, and she stood dumb and stricken. But the lady looked with almost loathing at the soiled, rough, black specimen of womanhood before her, and with bitterness of heart the woman of the dugout felt herself utterly changed beyond recognition. With heroic effort she recovered her self-control, and more to gain time than anything else, said in a cold, hard tone, "Who is your sister?"

As Alice repeated something of the story of the past, the two sisters stood looking at each other, one with an intenseness she could not restrain, the other with the shrinking aloofness of a dainty lady, gazing by compulsion upon something coarse and repulsive.

If the happy, well-kept Alice had seen a shadow of the lost sister, Mary, in the woman before her, the poor wanderer must have responded to even a faint recognition, and yielded to the cry of nature, but the utterly cold, uninterested look showed she had changed beyond all remembrance.

In an instant the resolution of the Panhandle woman was taken. Her lot was past help now. She would not add pain and sorrow to her sister's bright life. She would not relink her withered, shattered self, to the happy Alice. There was a gulf between them. She would not span it, if the separation broke her own heart.

"There is no such person as you describe here," she said abruptly. She could not be strong long—the *interview must end quickly!* With a look of repulsion, the fair Alice, coldly thanking her, re-entered the waiting conveyance, and was driven away.

She did not even look back! Had Alice turned one look behind she would have seen the Panhandle woman prone upon the ground, where, with arms outstretched she had fallen.

The husband and son coming in later from the field found the poor wanderer still lying in a dead faint.

When the summer was at its warmest and brightest they buried this woman near a lonely canyon, and the lovely golden rod, the little wild daisy, and the soft blue-gray sage brush are trying, just as she would have wished them, to *hide her grave.*

A BOY.

"UTTERLY incorrigible."

Yes, that was what the worried, wornout teacher said, as he sat alone in his room on Friday night, watching the wood fire flickering, blazing, dying out in pale glow amid the gathering ashes of his fireplace.

"What can reach him? I will try him one more day, and if he don't behave himself I am going to give him a thrashing that will count as long as he can remember. He's the toughest thing I've met yet."

Professor Grey (every teacher is "professor" in Texas) was very tired,—too tired to care whether his soliloquy was well-worded, his sentences complex or compound, his phrasing good or bad. That boy had tried him in every conceivable manner in the school room during the past week. Ordinary punishment seemed to have no effect upon Jack Ballard. Coarse, sullen, vicious, he defied the teacher every day. "Just thrash him," said the trustees. "He's given us more trouble than any boy in school. Frail him out."

"Professor" Grey had entered the profession of teaching with steadfast, earnest purpose. He wished to cultivate the heart, as well as the brain, of each pupil intrusted to his care; but Jack Ballard seemed utterly out of reach. Nothing so far had touched or bettered this uncouth, incorrigible boy.

"I'll give a fine knife," Professor Grey had said on the previous Monday, "to the boy who behaves best till Friday afternoon." It was a kind of forlorn hope. Most boys can be reached by a good pocketknife. "Jack, won't you try for the knife," the teacher kindly asked.

"I ain't the kind that gits prizes," was the sullen reply. "Georgie Turner's the chap 'll git it. He's one of your goody kind. I ain't."

Never, seemingly, had Jack been more idle or wantonly disobedient than all that week.

The prize failed utterly to effect its intended purpose.

"If Jack would learn, would get his lessons, I could overlook some things," murmured the troubled teacher this Friday night as he still worked on this human problem far more difficult of solution than originals in geometry.

The town of A———, on the Texas Pacific Railroad, had grown rapidly and gathered into its midst the varied population, good and bad, refined and degraded, usually drawn to a growing western village. The school exhibited the same perplexing variations, but of all the characters gentle or tough with which Professor Grey had to deal, none so utterly upset all his theories and so completely discouraged him as Jack Ballard.

"Was a rousing thrashing what the boy needed?" The teacher sat with bowed head and puzzled over his living problem. The fire died out and the ashes chilled in the fireplace.

Monday came. The demon of disobedience and reckless, sullen idleness seemed to possess Jack Ballard, and when at afternoon recess a fight came off, in which the boy was reported as aggressor, Professor Grey turned white with hardly suppressed anger, and resolved that a sound whipping would no longer be deferred.

No one was surprised when, at close of afternoon recitations, the teacher said, "Jack Ballard, I wish to see you after school." A look of sullen defiance and ugly resolve came on the boy's hard, sunburned face. When the pupils were all gone, and Professor Grey stood alone with Jack, a great pity—unbidden and un-

expected—rose in the teacher's kind heart. Something outcast and wretched in the lad's appearance hurt him. Mr. Grey's voice was troubled as he said, "Jack, I'm sorry to whip you."

"You needn't be, 'Fessor, I'm used to it;" Jack answered in hard, unchildish tone. The boy's stubborn manner irritated Professor Grey.

"Take off your jacket and shirt. I'm going to whip you so you'll remember it."

The boy removed the patched garment, hardly worthy the name of coat. He pulled somewhat more slowly at his dirty shirt,—it seemed to be stuck in places to his back. When he had removed it, he turned his bare shoulders, bent, and waiting for the teacher's lash.

The ticking of the clock sounded loud in the silent room. The teacher raised his whip to strike, then suddenly he dropped in a seat near by.

"Oh, my God," he said in a voice filled with emotion.

The boy's back had already been cut by blows from shoulder to waist-line; deep, bloody stripes lay all across it.

"What's the matter, 'Fessor; why don't you fire away? You see I'm used to it." came in hardened tone from

Jack Ballard, standing in position, waiting, waiting for the blow to come.

"Who whipped you in this brutal manner, Jack," asked the teacher, in a voice quivering with feeling.

The lad turned a stolid look at Professor Grey.

"That's nothing. Pap licks me that-a-way 'bout twice a day."

The teacher was trembling with rising indignation and deep emotion.

"Put on your coat, Jack Ballard. I can not whip you."

Jack stood in puzzled attitude. He couldn't understand. If 'Fessor Grey was going to flog him, why didn't he do it and be done foolin' 'bout it?

"Do you hear me, Jack? Put on your clothes. I can not strike you."

"You ain't goin' to lick me?" Jack asked in a dazed kind of astonishment?

"No, my boy," and Professor Grey's eyes were full of unshed tears as he continued, "I shall never whip you. I couldn't after what I have just seen. You can go. Try to bear your life as best you can. I want to help you, but I can never strike you."

The boy's face flushed painfully; then a softened look, a look unknown and hitherto strange to his whole being, passed over it.

The teacher had won. He had reached Jack Ballard's soul.

A TEXAS NORTHER.

A FACT,

THE weather was so delightful. Winter had seemingly forgotten Western Texas,—the sky had for days been without a cloud,—the morning burst forth crisp and fresh, making every nerve thrill with pleasure of living. It was sweet just to exist. The endless prairie with its soft patches of brown and gray and yellow weed and grasses, the bunches of scarlet sumac and golden mesquite, woke in the early riser every touch of poetry in his nature, every good impulse of health and happiness.

The prairie was so beautiful at dawn. I think, with the writer of Strathmore, "if people oftener saw the break of day they would oftener vow to keep that day holy," and would not so often let its fair hours drift away with nothing done.

The garden patch and lot, surrounded by the straggling fence, made partly of brush and in part of saplings hauled with patient labor from the "streak of timber," the stable, a product of every accessible material

which could be incorporated into its sides and roof, and the settler's cabin, built of "rawhide" lumber, were the only evidences in sight of the intrusion of civilized man on this beautiful stretch of western land, which lay in all its freshness and newness, this bright winter day, way back in the fifties, when Texas was young.

The occupants of the cabin were early risers. The smoke from the one sod chimney told of the busy housewife. The men were at the stable feeding the cattle, and as they left them greedily devouring their fodder, the call to come into breakfast sounded very welcome. Keen appetites enjoyed the simple meal of corn bread and bacon, and coffee without milk or sugar—milk was given to the calves. "It was a waste to feed it to humans," said stock men. Appetites stimulated by the fresh Texas air needed none of the varied temptations of our later morning dishes.

The day moved on. The atmosphere grew warm and balmy, and the earth began to take on a summer heat. The men smoked their pipes out on the rude "gallery," in their shirtsleeves, while the good wife sweltering by the warm fireplace hurried through her work in order to get out also, and take her "dip" in the open air, saying

to herself as she put away the dishes, "Its mighty hot; we're sure goin' to have a norther."

"Old woman," called her husband from the door, "I think we men 'ud better go to the timber to-day; the wood's most out, and there's going to be a norther soon."

"All right," cheerily replied the woman; "here's your overcoats, and be sure to put these blankets in the wagon. The norther may catch you before night."

"I'll bet you it's a whizzer when it does come," said one of the men as they started to the lot to "hitch up." It would be such a fine day for work, the woman thought. Only the two small boys left with her. No dinner to get. What a relief! Just the time to finish the quilt drawn up toward the roof of the room, out of the way.

Opening the "shutters," which served for light and ventilation also, and pushing wide the cabin door she sat down to a regular quilting. She was so anxious to get that quilt done. It was one she had brought from "Back in the States," and she had only just been able to get some cotton for filling in it.

It was the old fashioned "Irish chain," and nearly every block had its history. She rapidly wrought dia-

mond and shell with needle, but her thoughts were back in Georgia, where all the pieces had been given her. Here was a block from her mother's dress, dear mother —would she ever see her good, patient face again? And this was Mary Jane's dress, when she married Tom Jackson, and this was from Susie Butler's, and thus her mind was busy as the nimble fingers were plying the needle and thread.

The sun rose higher, the warmth increased, the breeze grew fainter, and the day more sultry. "Boys," called the mother, "you'd better get a back log and cut a lot of wood, there's bound to be a norther soon, it's so powerful hot."

The afternoon approached—more and more oppressive grew the heated atmosphere. The cattle in the distance guided by unerring instinct were moving toward the brush and timber "bottom." The tall weeds and grasses were motionless under the burning sun. The stillness of death was on the prairie. Presently a streak of gray along the northern horizon came in sight.

"My! but its mighty hot," said the woman. "I can't sit in here any longer." Drawing the unfinished quilt up by its ropes into the roof of her one small room, she passed out of the door fanning her heated face with

her blue checked apron. She turned an expectant look northward, and as she gazed the gray cloud began rapidly rising, darkening and pushing away the warm and tender blue above it.

"There comes the norther, boys," she cried. Even as the mother spoke, a swift gust of wind swept across the prairie, touching her warm cheek with an icy breath. Before the doors could be closed, and the fire coaxed into heat, the wind was beating with fury against the raw clap-boards, and the occupants of the little cabin were blue with cold and shivering as with ague.

In less time than it takes to write it, the breeze had risen almost to a hurricane. Before sundown the water in the bucket, the water in the chicken "trough," and everything outside was covered with ice. The shivering group drew closer around the fireplace and piled on the wood. "Son, look out and see if the men folks are coming," said the anxious woman. The sudden change of temperature, the loneliness and isolation, the howling of the bitter wind, and the something of dread we can never give a name, drove the blood from her face and shook her small frame as with a rigor chill.

"Mother," said the boy returning to the fire, "I don't see no one 'cept a man in his shirt sleeves, sitting on

a horse at the gate." "Lordy," cried the woman, all the spirit of frontier hospitality alive in a moment, "nobody ought to be out in such weather as this, go and tell him to 'light' and come right in out of the cold." Those were days of real Texas courtesy, when the latch string always hung outside and the stranger was heartily welcome to every cabin hearth and table. There was a touch of pathos even and actual sublimity about the unselfish, unquestioning hospitality of the early home of Texas. The boy rushed out in the bitter cold. When he returned there was a look upon his young face which the norther had not made.

"Mother," he said slowly, "the man wouldn't get down."

"What did he say?" asked the woman.

"He didn't say nothing."

"Oh, he didn't hear you, the wind's a blowing so; go out again." The mother spoke fretfully.

A distressed look spread over the child's face as he said, "I don't want to, mother."

Wondering a moment only at the unusual hesitation of the boy, she seized a large shawl and went out on her own errand of mercy. No one of God's creatures should suffer out in such bitter cold, while her fire was burning

brightly. As she glanced up the road she saw with glad heart the "men folks" near the lot gate. They were wrapped in their big overcoats and covered with blankets. The horses with wide spread nostrils and heads bent down were breasting the storm as best they could. She thought as she ran down the slippery path, how thankful she was her husband would soon be by the glowing fire, and that the much needed wood was now at hand.

The bitter norther struck her mercilessly in the face. The drizzle which was coming with it froze as it touched her. The sharp flakes of ice cut her cheek and almost closed her eyes. She pulled the shawl closer over her brow and with head bowed hurried up to the gate.

"Stranger, get down, quick; take your horse around there to the men folks, and come in to the fire; you're more'n welcome," she cried out in anxious, kindly, womanly tones.

She waited for him to speak, her face almost covered with the big gray shawl.

The fierce rush of the norther and the clicking of the falling ice was the only sound.

She put back her shawl and glanced up at the man

sitting in his shirt sleeves. In tender pity she began again in louder tones, "Stranger, get down and—"

She stopped—something in the man's look froze the word upon her lips. He moved not a muscle, only looked with wide open eyes, straight ahead. The horse he rode was trembling in every fibre.

A dreadful sense of fear swept over her soul, yet even then her yearning desire to save and help for a moment gave her power and command of self. She moved round and up nearer to see him better in the gathering shadows.

The men coming in from the lot heard a wild cry of agony and fear, and met her rushing to the cabin. They ran down to the gate.

In the deepening gloom they saw the silent figure, still seated on the shivering horse, still motionless, still staring with wide-open eyes.

When with coolness and determination of men they closed around the man and looked into his pallid, leaden face, they saw that he was stone, stark dead, and frozen stiff.

OLD NELSON.

TO watch old Nelson at work should encourage an industrious person, and shame a lazy one. To see Nelson pull, tug, climb by slow degrees, and painful effort, up on the back of Jim, his old blind horse, is enough to cure any beholder of saying, "I can't."

Uncle Nelson has been a helpless cripple ever since he was fourteen years old. For over fifty years he has walked upon his knees, which he covers with pieces of old quilts, and padding of leather. Born a slave and belonging to the sister of one of the Governors of Texas, old Nelson possesses somewhat the gentlemanly bearing, the courtly manner of his aristocratic owners.

Especially is his deportment to ladies, and his deferential emphasis of the word "Madame" particularly courteous. No ablebodied man about the little village of S[illegible], in Texas, works more constantly or industriously than Uncle Nelson.

Wherever any one has a garden to prepare, a lawn to mow, post holes to dig, wood to cut, or even cotton

to hoe and pick, there you will find the old man busily at work, and many strong fellows might learn lessons of determined endurance from this old slave, with the frost of over sixty years whitening his wool.

Nelson owns his own home, and makes a good living for his family of eight in number. "The three hosses makes eleben," said he. "I allus count my hosses in, cause dey has to eat, as well as folks."

"Don't your knees give out, Uncle Nelson?" I asked one day.

"Oh, yes dey does, shuh. Sometimes in de field I has to stop and undo um, and git all de pebbles and grit out, and at night I has to rub dem with lard, and turpentine, but I'se all right de nex day, Madam."

No complaint, no bitter wail from this old man.

> Twisted, crampen, and misshapen,
> This workingman with mouths to feed,
> Doomed to roll the stone up endless steep,
> Lifting its weight for life and food.

"You don't git discouraged and give up, Uncle Nelson?"

"No, Madame. Why should I. I don't owe no man a dollar, I gits all de work I ken do, an I'se got plenty to eat. Some of de folks tells me I'se too ole to wuck,

and I oughter go on de county, an I see big stout lookin' men gwine roun' beggin'. I don't want no county takin' me. No, Madame, ole Nelson ain't gwine on nobody, long's he can make a good liben. Dey ain't but one ting bodders me, an dat's bacon's so mighty high. I pays a dollah fur a piece of bacon, and by de time de ole ooman's cut off eight tollable good slices, I looks at de chunk of meat, an' says, 'Whar's my bacon? Whar's my dollah?'"

Uncle Nelson's old blind horse, which he has to ride every where, is a character in the little village also. Everyone knows old Jim. Whenever his owner is working, there, not far removed stands Jim. The horse understands the man's necessities thoroughly. When the crippled negro mounts by slow and tedious labor, Jim stands like a rock. If Nelson leaves the horse with the bridle on, he will remain motionless till his master returns.

"Ef I didn't come back till de day ob judgment," said Nelson, "Jim ud jes be a standin' thar."

"If, however, the bridle is taken off, Jim understands then that he has the privilege of grazing around, but no matter where he may wander in nibbling the juicy

grasses, at the sound of Nelson's voice, the old horse will go immediately to his waiting master.

"How old is Jim, Uncle Nelson?" said I.

"I don't know how old dat hoss is, Madame. Dey ain't no tellin' how ole Jim is."

Old Nelson went all through the Confederate war as a body servant.

Back at the plantation home in Tennessee his young Massa Tom joined a company of cavalry. Tom's mother said to Nelson, "You've always belonged to your Massa Tom. I know you love him. Take your horse and go with him. I know you will watch over and care for my boy," and through all the hardships and vicissitudes of camp or the field, the body servant followed the man he loved, with unfailing constancy. In every battle where Lieutenant Tom was, Nelson kept close by. In the skirmishing and fighting along Yellow Bayou, and at Bayou Boeuf in Louisiana, the servant always managed to keep in sight of his gallant young master.

"Ef dat boy gits killed I's shuly gwine to be close to him."

At the fight of Loyd's bridge, Lieutenant Tom was shot through the heart. Nelson saw him fall.

Quickly the crippled slave dropped from his own horse. Through dead and dying, with shot and shell falling round him, he made his way, walking as ever upon his knees, to his young master. He raised the body, tried to stop the flow of blood, but life was extinct; the brave heart had ceased to beat. Then without thought of danger, Nelson waited by the dead man till the fight was over and a passing officer of the Federal army gave him permission to carry away the dead body.

"My heart was broke for dat boy. I lubbed my Massa Tom. I couldn't leab his body to be tromped on, and rode ober," said he afterwards.

In the crippled condition of his own limbs, Nelson could not carry so large a man as the dead soldier any distance. Going to a house near by the faithful slave procured a strong piece of rope, then took his own gentle old horse up to the place where the dead man lay. He tied the rope around the body just under his master's arms, then he threw the other ends over the saddle and on the other side of the horse. Getting under the animal he pulled the body with the rope and pushed it up with one hand on the other side. Straining every muscle, tugging, working with undaunted effort, at last he

rested the body across the saddle. With this obstruction in the way it was with great difficulty that Nelson could get himself also upon the horse's back.

With persistent effort he climbed up, and holding the dead body in front of him, rode several miles to the plantation of a widow lady. Of her Nelson asked permission to bury his loved one, inside the field.

"Yes," said the good lady, "bury your young master here. I will take care of his grave, for the sake of a soldier and for the slave who loved him." They found some pine boards which Nelson nailed together, and though the coffin thus made was rough and coarse, it was sanctified by love and unconquerable fidelity, and Lieutenant Tom was laid in a grave just inside the plantation fence, near the long turn row.

Nelson now became body servant to the eldest son of his old mistress, and went through the war with his Massa John.

When peace was declared and the soldiers were disbanded, Nelson found his way back to the old plantation home in Tennessee.

How he missed his young Master Tom, his boyish playmate, his lifetime companion.

The summer passed; autumn came with ripened nut and fruit. The coons and the 'possums were fat in the hollows. How many moonlight nights he and Massa Tom had hunted together; how many coons they had treed; how many 'possums they had caught just such nights. Christmas was coming. Nelson could not remember a Christmas on the old plantation without Massa Tom.

The time passed sadly, and when December came Nelson said one day, "Ole Mistiss, I can't stan' it to have Christmas come, 'thout Massa Tom bein' home. You knows I 'member right whar I buried him. Ef you'll let me I'll brung him home fur Christmas."

And so it came to pass that Nelson wended his way back to Louisiana, and once more stood at the grave of his young master.

Help was at the command of money. Nelson had the remains taken up and when Christmas day came, bearing its message of love to earth's children, the faithful body servant, the loyal, loving slave, sat with bowed head in the great hall of the Tennessee home. He sat beside all that remained of his boyhood comrade, his beloved Massa Tom.

The soldier's body would soon rest for aye in the old home burial ground, and the old slave was content.

Old Nelson digs and hoes, and cheerily works from day to day in the sleepy little town of S———, in Texas, and he is all unconscious that in any way, or at any time, he has been a hero.

IN THE PANHANDLE OF TEXAS.

DID you ever go to a picnic in the Panhandle of Texas?

Then, however, worn and blase you may be, however prostrate life's hard blows may have left you, however tame all other sports have become to you, there is one piece of fun left for you to nibble on, which will surely leave a pleasant taste behind it.

Stay in the Panhandle two or three months and you get all the superfluous starch taken out of your character, and you become fitted for real fun. You learn to be happy because the air is pure, because the fields are green, because the sun is bright. You get happiness there just as you catch the measles in more densely peopled places, hardly knowing how it comes to you. You are ready to walk to the top of Mount Nebo, or tramp miles through the canyons, gathering plums for your physical man, or golden rod for your esthetic edification.

Go in a wagon to a picnic?

Why, yes, you don't want to go any other way. It would be tame.

Then if one of your horses or both of them have been "locoed," so that every little while on the route, they will nearly turn a summersault backwards, you have an outfit complete for a Panhandle experience.

The Iron Mountain Ranch invited the whole community round to have a picnic within its grounds. In the vast territory owned by this cattle company they were fortunate enough to have one wide, long canyon, where nature, as if a monument of unusual generosity, had planted quite a lot of trees and plenty of small brush. Here on the morning for the picnic the whole community began to gather. Distance does not count in the Panhandle. Your neighbors are apt to be ten miles from you, nevertheless they are neighbors in the truest sense, neighbors to ride over to welcome you when you first come, a stranger, to "take up your section;" neighbors to drop in again to see how you are getting along; neighbors who unhitch the plow and stop the planting to come and wait upon you if sickness overtakes you. There are few priests or Levites who "pass on" in the Panhandle. So distance did not keep any at home on this sunny holiday.

They came from the other side of the railroad, from the big ranches in the adjoining county, from the Cap

Rock settlements at the foot of the Staked Plains. They came with wagons, with ox teams, on horse back and on foot, people tanned and darkened by the prairie wind, but happy and hearty and full of the joyous sense of pleasure. The cowboys were out in full. The conception many have in the old States of the whole race of cowboys is a little comical to those who really know about them.

They are not all roughs and toughs. They are your boys, and my boys, many of them from the best families; boys who have given down physically in the confinement of school or business, and must get out into the open air, the life-giving exercise of the prairies of Texas. Or they are boys whose vigor and healthy bodies engender that restless activity which must vent itself, but which afterward settles and they become our doctors and lawyers, our leaders. They are gentlemanly boys, boys who may drop for a time into the rough life by which they find themselves surrounded, but who take up again the gentleness of home training, as easily as they regain their city complexion and stylish clothing.

So the people collected at the canyon and the piles of lunch baskets and buckets grew a sight to behold, a sub-

ject of congratulation to the hungry soul, and one is always hungry in the Panhandle.

And if you think the women of the Panhandle can not cook well, you should be sent like David's messengers of old, down to Jericho till your beard and knowledge have grown.

The invincible woman is not out done by the inconvenience of a dugout kitchen, and sends juicy venison, pies made out of nothing as she will tell you, cakes light and tempting, the omnipresent chicken, and all the usual menu of a picnic dinner, well cooked and nicely presented. Among the happy throng in the canyon that picnic day was a sturdy youth named Sam Glover, who met there for the first time a pretty, dark-eyed maiden of the "Settlement," Daisy Lessing.

The moment they looked into each other's eyes their fate was sealed. The spell of Cupid settled upon their young hearts, and in a short time their attitude toward each other expressed most completely the tide of feeling which had engulfed them, and became a matter of observation and jest to every one.

By dinner time the lookers on saw that the two were emphatically and undisputably in love.

This was so manifest by the time they all gathered

round the ample dinner spread upon the grass, that a pleasant and continued "joshing" of the young lovers began, in that manner of easy familiarity so common among frontier people.

Sam and the girl, laughed, blushed, and talked back, till at last he said in a big, bashful way, "Now, here, you needn't think I care what you say; I've got her sure enough."

"Why, Sam, you havn't had time to pop the question," laughingly said one of the boys.

"I bet you I have done done it," sturdily came back from Sam, looking down fondly at the face blushing beneath his gaze.

The two were absorbed in each other, unmoved by the merry criticism or gaze of the amused crowd. The whole grounds were to them a garden of Eden, and they the sole occupants.

Early after dinner people noticed Sam and a friend of his mount their horses and ride rapidly away.

The fun and merriment of the picnickers increased with the pleasant feelings aroused by a good dinner. Neighbor laughed and joked with neighbor, with the easy abandonment of children. They talked of the wheat crop, and the school house being built, the trus-

tees to be elected, and the new thresher in the neighborhood.

The women gossiped about the garden they had tried to have, the chickens the wind blew away, and the flowers the stiff breezes whipped into wretched specimens of plant life.

The evening sun was getting low and every one making ready to leave, when Sam Glover galloped into view, dismounted, and rapidly approached the young girl Daisy, who had captured him apparently body and soul.

In a sheepish and yet resolute way he took her hand and led her to Judge B———, the magistrate; then, with the latter accompanying them, proceeded out to the big road near by.

Like lightning, word spread from lip to lip that there was going to be a wedding, and a procession composed of all the company quickly formed and followed the young couple.

The road just over the rise of ground near by was the dividing line between two counties.

Walking rapidly, Sam Glover, the bonnie Panhandle girl Daisy Lessing, and the magistrate, reached the road and stepped across on the other side.

It was necessary for the ceremony to be performed in

the county where Sam had just procured his license. The young groom and expectant bride stood side by side on the green turf in one county, the spectators arranged themselves on the near side of the road, and consequently were in another county. The evening sun lit up the light brown hair of the young girl, and played its beams around the head of her lover. The prairie dogs danced in and out of their holes near by like fairy attendants. The supreme happiness of the moment was as complete out in this reception room furnished by Dame Nature with only the blue canopy of God's sky above them, as it would have been in the parlors of a millionaire with settings of gold and perfume of exotics. The words are so few that change the whole current of man and woman's life. In a moment the twain were one flesh. He had naught with which to endow her, save a dugout on a "raw section" and manly, loving heart, but she looked into his face with quite as much trust and loyalty as we see in the bride of the esteemed gentleman who has had secured to her doweries and settlements by all process of legal arrangements.

The old story, old as Adam and Eve. The world will always have its youthful lovers. They will not be dug

up in the thirteenth century and handed down as relics of prehistoric ages.

The crowd of picnickers now gathered round the new couple, wishing them joy, and saying, "What a daisy picnic," and the cowboys, with a keen sense of humor, struck up with clear, ringing tone the chorus of that dear little love song,

"She's my sweetheart,
I'm her beau,
She's my Annie,
I'm her Joe."

THE RED RIVER PLANTATION.

VERY one loved Aunt Julia. No one ever thought of calling her Mrs. Carroll. She was Aunt Julia to the whole neighborhood.

On her aging face was the "beauty of goodness," which Victor Hugo says comes to those whose lives have grown old in kind deeds, and generous affection for humanity.

Her slaves loved her, were loyal to her, but took advantage of her indulgent disposition whenever work was concerned. A large plantation of rich bottom land on Red River, with fifty good working hands, hardly raised enough to make both ends meet.

Aunt Julia often wished her negroes were free, and well provided for, but "My, My," she would exclaim, "I couldn't turn the poor helpless creatures out to manage for themselves. Why, they would starve to death. You know my father gave them to me, and I'm bound to keep them and see that they are clothed and fed."

Her overseer had a continued conflict in endeavoring to get the best amount of labor for a mistress who

thought of her slaves as only a body of children dependent upon her to be taken care of.

However, matters were progressing nicely just now on the pretty Red River plantation.

The acres and acres of cotton rows were white with their beautiful product. The negroes picking sang their wailing monotones in choruses of many voices. They were well clothed and plentifully fed. A glance across beyond the "new ground," where the frost would soon come to ripen the golden persimmons, or the thought of 'possums fattening on the grapes and berries in the many colored woods, was enough to make them childishly happy.

When the sun went down on that bright October day, and the cotton picked since morning had been duly weighed, and the long procession of negroes wended their way to the "quarter," quiet and peace seemed hovering everywhere over the beautiful Southern home.

In "the white folks' house," the family, consisting of a young son and a grown daughter, was gathered after the evening meal in Aunt Julia's large, comfortable room.

Aunt Julia was a widow.

The overseer came in after a while to talk about the work of the month, and other plantation business.

They all chatted pleasantly an hour or so.

Then Mr. Earle, rising, bade them a pleasant good-night.

He passed into the hall, out of the door, out of the gallery, and out of their lives forever! for though the family would have given half the plantation, nay more even, to have found him, no trace of him remained, no sign of him living or dead, or anything showing his manner of departure could be discovered.

The negroes came to the house next morning asking for the overseer who had not been to the "quarter" as usual directing their work.

Aunt Julia, supposing Mr. Earle had ridden over to the next plantation told the negro foreman, Uncle Sam, to attend to business.

Noon came, but no overseer.

At night he had not appeared.

Aunt Julia began to feel indignant at such absence and neglect of her business, and the anxiety, uncertainty, and strangeness of it all made her nervously eager to learn where Mr. Earle could be, and what was the cause of his sudden disappearance.

One, two, three days passed.

He did not come.

Her young boy Charles told the neighbors and friends, and every inquiry was made, but no one had seen or heard of Mr. Earle. There were no telephones in those days, few lines of telegraph, no rapid way of communicating such events to neighboring or distant communities.

Men living near began to come to the plantation, not like friends, but to ask strange questions. They looked about with keen, suspicious glances, walked round the yard, and down through the "quarter."

The mysterious disappearance could not be accounted for. Aunt Julia and family became much distressed, and the negroes were afraid to leave their cabins after dark, fearing they might see the overseer's "haunt."

Every inquiry, every effort, was made by the troubled mistress and her friends to learn something of the lost man, but without avail.

Men in the community began to talk mysteriously, to hint to one another, to whisper that something was wrong.

Some boldly asserted that Mr. Earle must have been dealt foully with.

At last officers were sent to search the plantation. Every room in the house, the overseer's cottage, and the quarters were duly investigated, but no sign of blood, no evidence of a struggle, no trace of any kind of the lost man was found. The family made their statement, and the matter rested for the time being.

In the edge of the "Piney Woods," a few miles below the plantation was a settlement of "poor whites," whose ignorant hatred of their wealthy neighbors began to find many opportunities for expression in the later days of the war.

They could at least persecute helpless women, while the planters were bravely fighting far away.

A certain parson, who throve upon their prejudices, reported to this Piney Woods settlement the disappearance of Mr. Earle, with every coloring and addition which would arouse their worst passions.

He fanned these feelings to a fury by assuring them if the overseer had been a rich man the officers would not have so easily let the matter end with a mere examination, and asserted boldly that of course the negroes on Mrs. Carroll's place had killed him. She was a rich widow, and what was the life of a poor overseer com-

pared to a good hand, worth fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars.

Furious and determined to right these wrongs, a number of this "white gang" resolved themselves into a company of regulators, and rode over to the plantation.

The leader of the crowd told Aunt Julia they claimed the privilege of examining the place, and also of seeing what could be found out from the negroes. Aunt Julia felt the loneliness of her widowhood.

Their slouch hats, partly hiding the face, the clanking spurs, the unkempt beards, the coarseness of brutal anger on their faces, might have intimidated even a man.

She trembled with fear and distress, not—dear woman and tender mistress—for herself, but for her poor slaves in the hands of these fierce, ignorant men, yet she realized that she could not deny them the right to satisfy themselves about the missing man.

In a coarse manner, so insulting to a lady, they looked through every room. She bore their aggressive, impertinent air with perfect patience and dignity. They passed out of the house and down to the "quarter."

In the general distress and anxious search for the

overseer, work had almost been suspended, and many of the slaves were idly standing around their cabins. After some examination and much parleying, the mob fastened their suspicions upon the black foreman, old Sam.

Of all her slaves, Aunt Julia seemed more bound by ties of tenderness and confidence to old Sam than any other servant on the plantation. He was so capable, so humble, so trusty.

He it was whom she consulted on many matters about home and the field. It was Sam who reported to her at night how much cotton was daily gathered. When at sundown the negroes came up the long turn row singing, with their baskets of fleecy cotton poised upon their heads, it was Sam who always weighed each measure, and who, ignorant of writing and figures, would report to the overseer correctly every number of pounds picked by each hand.

From Aunt Julia's childhood Sam had belonged to her, and through her lonely widowhood he had well and faithfully served her.

But the mob from Piney Woods were not given to sentiment.

Sam was tied, ordered to confess, and then brutally, cruelly whipped.

A rope was next placed around his neck, and he was dragged to a neighboring tree. So many moments were given him to confess the murder, or receive death by hanging.

More dead than alive the poor old slave said he would tell all.

In a faint voice he acknowledged that he had killed Mr. Earle.

"Where is the body?" cried the savage men.

"In de lake," moaned Sam, pointing to a large pond just below the house, made by a small bayou or cut-off from the river.

Immediately the mob made preparation to drag the lake, taking poor old Sam, nearly exhausted by suffering and fear, to show them more about the horrible secret. Some of the negroes slipped up to the house and told the anxious mistress what had been done.

Seizing her sunbonnet she rushed to the lake, where the party were dragging for the body.

Standing as near Sam as she could without attracting attention, she found opportunity to say, "Sam, did you do this awful deed?"

"No, Miss Julia, fore God I don't know nuffin bout Mr. Earle."

"Then what did you confess the murder for?"

"Dey would hab killed me, Mistus," was Sam's whispered reply.

The mob dragged the pond from end to end with no result.

No dead body was given up by its troubled waters.

Some one said, "The old nigger fooled you all."

Fired by this suspicion, angry and disappointed, they turned again to the wretched Sam.

"Bring a rope," they cried; "we'll fix him and his lies."

But with flashing eyes and every muscle sprung, Aunt Julia had stepped in between them and their victim.

"Touch him if you dare!" she cried with a ringing voice, clear and fearless. "He is innocent, and you will have to walk over my dead body if you harm him. He is my slave, and I *will* protect him. Don't one of you dare to touch *him*."

Her bonnet had fallen back on her shoulders, and the lingering rays of the October sun lovingly lit up her sweet face, and sent its gold and sheen across her gray-brown hair.

She held the fort.

It is strange how one brave soul, even a little woman, can stay the step of an angry mob.

She stood before them in the fearless majesty of womanhood.

Her dark gray eye never faltered, her tense muscles did not relax, and the last tender gleam of sunlight shone on a little woman triumphant, and a poor, bleeding slave rescued from death.

And the overseer? O, well he turned up afterwards in Texas, but as Kipling says, that belongs to another story.

COMMENCEMENT IN TEXAS IN THE SEVENTIES.

THE chapel of the old college was packed with eager, expectant people. As long as the world has children, the interest in commencement exercises will never cease. As long as devoted mothers and proud fathers exist, the manly boy with his oration carefully in the inner coat pocket, directly over his palpitating heart, and the sweet girl graduate, with her essay which the whole family has watched from start to finish, will be objects of intense and anxious interest, and they are persons whose local importance at such times will never abate.

Nothing ever comes to the boy or girl of more wonderful and individual responsibility than this graduation day, with its inevitable oration and essay. Marrying may be quite as exciting, but there are always two parties to that undertaking. The burden seems divided, each supports the other, but the day you graduate you stand alone, and just as you succeed, or fall below, so you sever your connection with your school days, and

start in the new life, either covered with glory or shadowed by failure.

There was unusual excitement this Commencement in the old town of S—— twenty years ago. It was about the time when the wave of modern elocution was passing over Texas, and besides the usual graduating class, a contest in elocution was to take place at night. A gold medal was offered for the best recitation. It was something new, and when the hour arrived, the hall was filled to its utmost capacity.

Twenty years ago the boys had not cried "Make Way for Liberty!" till the interest of the audience as well as Arnold Winkelried had died. People had not been "Archie Dean'ed" till disgusted with "light coquettish manner." "Mabel" had not worried them with her face forever "against the window pane." They had not even thought how "Ruby played." Audiences were yet willing to hear about the "Thatched Cottage" and "Little Jim," the "Burning of Chicago" still thrilled all hearts, and "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night"—was new!!

It seems incredible now, but there was a time at this old school when "Curfew" had never been recited, and its beautiful poetry had not been worn to a "frazzle." The day had passed with its eventful commencement

exercises and the evening's program of recitations by the boys and girls who had entered the elocution contest, began. One after another they stood before the audience with their chosen poem, and did their level best.

Miss Bell, the teacher, had trained them well, but elocution, like poetry, is a "gift of the gods."

Finally, across the stage, her simple, pure white dress a shimmer of light, came the last speaker, a girl. As she made her timid bow, and stood in youthful grace looking a moment into the sea of faces around her, a hot flush covered her brow, then quickly died out in a sudden pallor. In a clear, sweet voice which reached every part of the hushed assembly, she began the words,

"England's sun was slowly setting, o'er the hills so far away"—

A beautiful girl was Annie Grey. Her face was fair to look upon, a face not only beautiful in line and feature, but a face with character and soul in it—soul to feel every line of this touching incident in English history. As she recited verse after verse, her voice trembled, thrilled, caught every conception of the pathos, beauty, heroism, and strength in each line. Her face glowed with high resolve, her lips quivered with the ten-

derness of love, she lost sight of surroundings, forgot the upturned faces of the listening people. She it was "Swinging out, far out 'twixt earth and heaven," and it was her lover's life at stake. When the last line, "Curfew shall not ring to-night," sounded upon the ear of the audience, there was not a dry eye in their midst, and they sat motionless, thrilled beyond all past experience. For a few moments they even forgot to cheer, then the applause came decided and prolonged. The three judges now left the hall for conference, and the audience waited with ill concealed eagerness for their decision.

If the men composing the committee for awarding the gold medal had been men of broad views, of courageous character, and good judgment, their decision could have been formed in a few minutes, but they, as will happen sometimes, let an element outside of the simple merit in question be brought into consideration.

The committee was a unit in the opinion that nothing had ever been presented there finer than the poem and the manner it was delivered, but the stumbling block in the way of the judges, the lion in their pathway, was the fact that Annie Grey was a rich girl, the daughter of the wealthiest man in the community, and

the girl who stood next to her in merit in the contest was the child of a family in more limited circumstances. They dared not give the medal to the rich girl. Everybody they *feared* would say her gold had bought their decision. For the bitterness of the injustice, for the effect on the young girl, they did not care so much as keeping themselves free from censure with which in their narrow conception they imagined the people of that town would overwhelm them should they decide in favor of Annie Grey. People talk a great deal of the mortification, injustice, and prejudice a poor girl or boy has to contend with even in life's beginning at school, but often it is nothing compared to the cutting jealousy, the unfairness, meted out to one who is unfortunate enough to be very rich. No mercy is shown them in peace or war. They may be the best and most obedient student in school. If the teacher shows the slightest approval of these good traits, he is adjudged partial, influenced by money, and the boy or girl is punished in the many ways known to schoolmates for being a "pet."

Annie Grey had honestly won her laurels this day. She had carried all hearts before her, and the audience

waited restlessly for the judges to come in and give the young girl her reward.

When the committee entered, the assembly burst into a round of applause. In their hearts they were cheering for Annie Grey, and "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight." The spokesman stepped forward and in an impressive manner said: "Ladies and gentlemen, after much deliberation and viewing the matter from every standpoint, we have decided to give the medal to Miss Aline Foster. Come forward, Miss Foster."

You could have heard a pin drop. Blank astonishment was on every face, and all eyes turned quickly to Annie Grey. She sat perfectly still, but her face was ashen pale.

For a moment Aline Foster stood as one dazed. She looked at the glistening medal lying in her hand, at the hushed and watching people before her, then her sense of what was right, her own generous recognition of her classmate's merit, and the injustice of the award, swept over the girl's noble soul, and rushing across the stage she laid the gold medal in the hands of Annie Grey.

"Oh, Annie," she cried, "It's yours. I have no right to it. I can not take it. You won it; I couldn't keep it."

Then how the people cheered. Yes, they made the old chapel ring till the very steeple caught the shouts and sent them out to the hills beyond.

Of course Annie Grey did not keep the medal. She could not under the circumstances, but the generous act of justice in her classmate, and the rousing indorsement of it by the indignant assembly, was some atonement for the bitter injustice of the august committee.

A MEMORY OF TEXAS.

OW are you now, Massa Rufe?"

"I'm no better, Sam," answered the young man feebly, as he lay by the open window at the old plantation home near Austin. "You may take me in to Austin to-morrow."

"All right, sah; I'll go and git de hack ready," and the strong, bright looking black boy passed out, and down to the stables.

Turning weakly toward me, the sick man said, "Did I ever tell about Sam's generous devotion to me? You know father gave Sam to me when I was quite a little boy. He told me I could have any of the little nigs I wanted at the 'quarters.' So I claimed Sam while he was still at the nursery.

"I used to go by every day and ask Mammy Mary about him, and play with him. When he grew older he was my constant companion all over the plantation. He dug bait, while I fished. We smoked rabbits out of hollow logs, treed coons and hunted 'possum down there in the river bottom. We learned to swim in the

back water, and many a trap we have set in the old field over yonder. He followed me all through the war, a faithful body servant. It was some time after peace was declared before he would take advantage of his proffered freedom, but I had gone into business in Austin, and could no longer afford the luxury of a body servant. Sam's father, 'Old Sam,' as everyone called him was a fine mason. Father used to hire him out to contractors, and he helped build the old capitol. Old Sam now found plenty of paying work, and even began taking contracts himself.

"So he took young Sam in with him, and the firm of 'Old Sam and young Sam' prospered and made money. This they invested in suburban lots, upon which in dull seasons they built good rock houses. The railroads came, their property became valuable, the houses rented well, and the colored firm soon had money in the bank.

"My health gave way. I clung to business until the doctor said nothing would save me but constant life in the open air. So fitting up a hack and hiring a driver, I traveled and camped for months in the Texas prairies. But I had waited too long—my doom was sealed. Paying out constantly and nothing coming in, is depleting

to one's pocketbook. It is bad enough to be hopelessly ill, but to face an uncertain income in this condition is a horror.

"I could not ask help from father, for the plantation made nothing. So a miserable sense of uneasiness was added to my sufferings.

"After a long trip out West I drove one day into Austin. Passing down the Avenue, the driver rested the team in front of Sampson & Hendricks' old store. I lay upon the bed in the hack, discouraged, depressed, hopeless, not caring to see or speak to anyone. I was worse and much weaker than ever before.

"Suddenly a black head was thrust under the curtain. I looked up. It was Sam, my Sam, as I still called him.

" 'How is you, Massa Rufe?'

" 'Worse, Sam; I don't believe I'm ever going to get better,' I gloomily answered.

" 'Oh, yes you is, Massa Rufe. You jess needs good nussing, sah, an' I cum pupusly to see you about it. I know Massa Tom's done all broke up, an' can't do nothin,' an' you can't wuck, an' git all you needs yourself. Now Massa Rufe you knows I allus did blong to you, I ain't got nobody else to ker fur or wuck fur. Me an' daddy makes lots of money, an' I'se done got $500

in de bank, sah, an' hit's all fur you, Massa Rufe. Sam haint got no use fur hit, sah; an', Massa Rufe, in de new house daddy's jest built, I'se got two rooms an' I'se done got furniture in dem, des like you useter hab at Massa Tom's, and de rooms is all ready fur you, an' if you'll use 'em, Massa Rufe, I'll wait on you an' take kere ob you des lak I used to sah. I kin make plenty ob money fur us boff, an' good nussin 'll cure you. Won't you come, Massa Rufe? I ain't got no use fur money 'less you'll use hit, Massa Rufe.' "

"What did you say?" I asked when the sick man paused.

"Say," said the dying Rufus, "I couldn't say anything. I raised up and putting my weak arms around Sam's neck, I lay with my weary, aching head upon his broad black breast, strengthened by his love, and soothed as a child when pillowed upon its mother's bosom.

"The passing group on the busy Avenue moved wonderingly by, but I cared for nothing save the sweet sense of the refuge I felt in the devotion of my boyish companion, my faithful slave, Sam, who still, as he said, belonged to me, held by a bond no legislation could sever.

"When I could speak," continued Rufus slowly and painfully, "I told Sam I had some means still, and I must keep moving on, but if he wished, he should go with me, and when I became too weak to travel, he should take me and do with me as he wished.

"So for weeks Sam has been my sole companion over the Texas prairies, but I have given up; I am a dying man; I haven't told father yet; I can't someway. But this is my last visit to the old plantation, and Sam will take me to his home to-morrow. I will die there."

At midnight a quick cry from Sam brought the family into the sick man's room. Rufus lay with his head upon Sam's shoulder, and with one thin hand lovingly clasped by the strong black one.

The young master had gone where he would never perhaps need furnished rooms, nor silver, nor gold, but where unselfish love would be, as it should be, always above par.

CHANGE CARS FOR AUSTIN.

THE Katy south-bound train drew up slowly at Taylor and the crowd began moving and pushing out of the coaches and down the steps. An elderly woman walked laboriously along in the jam, her bundles and packages sticking out in everybody's way, and terribly hindering her own progress. She carried a cheap black oil cloth valise, stuffed to its fullest extent, a big, square bundle looking like a load itself, a hamper basket, and some minor packages.

The full, old fashioned alpaca skirt, the bonnet trimmed with limp rusty, black ribbon, the knit woolen half hand gloves on the coarse hands, proclaimed her lot in life more effectually than words could have done. The determined effort to hold her place and get out somehow gave for the time a set look to her sunburned face, but her blue eyes were bright with satisfaction when she landed safely upon the ground, and her whole expression was kindness and benevolent good will, even to the rushing, pushing throng of which she seemed so insignificant a part.

The brakeman had looked cross and ugly as he helped her down the step, the negro boys who had offered in vain to relieve her of some of her bundles, for a consideration in silver, whistled and threw up their hats scornfully as they turned from her, but she struggled along without a frown, and seemingly happy in "toting" her own possessions.

A young couple, evidently man and wife, walked a few feet behind the old woman. They were unburdened by even a hand satchel.

"Why in thunder don't that old lady put her bundles in the baggage car," said the man, a handsome young fellow, well dressed, and evidently well fed and cared for. "You women beat the Jews for always having boxes and bundles. Why, I'd stay at home forever before I'd pack such a lot of rubbish as that. Why don't she let some of those black boys carry her valise?"

His companion, a fair young woman, with the tenderness of human interest on her face, looked a few moments at the old lady before them, wearily dragging along with her weighted arms aching no doubt under their load.

An infinite tenderness spread over the wife's girlish face. She laid one hand lightly upon her husband's

arm as if to add weight to what she was about to say:

"Paul, I'll wager anything that is some poor mother, and she's taking in her bundles some hard earned gifts to loved ones somewhere. Women don't do such things for aught but love. She'd be just as glad to travel without a burden as you or I, but she can't afford to pay freight, or hire a boy to transfer the things to the other depot. She is taking loving gifts to some son or daughter, poorer than herself."

"I'll bet five dollars you're wrong, and I'll find out," and with a few manly strides, Paul Chalmers was by the side of the old woman. He was a gentleman at heart; he lifted his hat with as much courtesy to this laboring, plainly dressed person, as he would have done to one of his own station in life. She was a *woman,* and he bowed to his wife and mother, and all womanhood in her, poor representative as she was.

"Madam, let me help you to the next depot. You're loaded down," and he reached in his masterful way, taking two or three of her bundles, without waiting her consent.

"Oh yes, sir," the old lady replied in bright, cheery tones, giving up her things without fear or hesitation. "The boys at home said, 'Why, mother, you will never

get to Austin with all them bundles.' But my son Tom is married and lives in Austin you know. He's got a good job and he's a hard working boy, but it costs a powerful lot to live in them big towns. Why they have to pay for the water they drink. My stars, I think the dear Lord made the water free for everybody. I'd hate mightily to pay for every drink I tuck. So as I was going to visit Tom and his wife, I thought I would try and help them a little. I've got some pretty cups and saucers in that valise, an' a glass pitcher. I made the money for 'em myself sellin' chickens, and that big basket is full of fresh eggs, and I pieced them the quilt in this yer bundle, an' them's some snap beans and new potatoes in these little bundles. Why, they don't get a good mess for a dime, down at Austin. I couldn't put my things in that baggage car. I jist know them baggage men would smash the last thing to bits. Why, they don't care where they fling one's duds. Lordy, there wouldn't a bin a whole cup in the valise, time I got to Austin, but I'd go to lots more trouble than this, 'fore I'd miss getting the things safe there," and the cheery little woman chatted frankly on, trotting briskly along, keeping well up with the long strides of the kindly man beside her. Her artless talk, her utter for-

getfulness of self, touched all that was manly and true in Paul Chalmers.

Unconsciously the old woman was doing him good, for his was a light, easy nature, whose best depths had never been sounded fully. It is ever thus with kindness, for "like mercy, it is twice blessed."

They reached the lower depot. "I'll just set out here; its bright and sunny, and I'll be closter to the train when it comes along. My! My! they do rush a body so on these railroads," said the old mother as she seated herself on a box with her bundles around her.

The I. & G. N. passenger train whistled, and with slowly sounding bell moved up the track.

"Pet, step on board and I'll be with you in a moment," said Paul Chalmers to his waiting wife, as he picked up the disreputable looking valise with its precious dishes, and gently raised the basket of eggs. When he entered the coach where his young wife was, the old lady had been carefully settled on a good seat with her treasures around her.

"Pet," the husband said as he sat down, "I've lost my bet, but I've learned something," and his eyes looked "mighty watery" and tender, for a man.

PARSON HALL.

"THEY tell me you've volunteered for the war?" Parson Hall had a rich, mellow, kindly voice, a voice whose every intonation carried with it peace and good will toward men.

"Yes, brother Hall," answered Norman Crosslin slowly and thoughtfully. He was a good Methodist boy, and "raised" to say brother to the preacher.

"When do you leave us?"

"I have to report at Austin next week, sir."

There was silence for a little while.

Parson Hall was tall, with a well-knit frame, though bending slightly under the weight of fifty years. His pleasant blue eye had a look of sorrow and sympathy in it now, as he stood on the roadside near his own gate, gazing up at Norman Crosslin, seated with the uncultivated grace of a Texas cowboy, on a gaily prancing horse. Perhaps there was something in the easy poise of the young, manly rider,—some ring in the tones of the clear strong voice, some memory of days gone by,

that brought to the minister's mind his own boy, not long since laid to rest in the churchyard near by.

There was a slight trembling of his lips when he asked somewhat hesitatingly, and very gently, "What are you going to do with the young wife and that baby boy?"

"That's the tough part of it, Brother Hall. I have no support but my daily labor, you know. I *must* go sooner or later, for I don't want to be drafted, but Annie and the boy—." He stopped short and looked away over the prairie to the skirting timber in the distance, where the cattle were drifting out of the warming sun into the cool shades waving and beckoning to them.

He wasn't acting a bit like a warrior. There was a tremor in the lines of his face, a gathering moisture in his eye, and a nervous beating of the quirt against his boot tops, but the broad shoulder, the resolute movement of body, the bearing of the man was masterly.

He would make a good soldier for all the tenderness to wife and baby.

"Norman," said Parson Hall, "don't look that way. It hurts me. I am too old to go to the army, but I can help those who do. As there is a God above me whom I love and serve, Annie and your boy shall want for

nothing that I can get them. There is room in my house. They shall live with wife and I, till you return. I have plenty. I will care for Annie as my own."

Old Parson Hall had preached many good sermons, but never a better one than this.

Norman Crosslin dismounted.

He could not thank such a man sitting above him on horseback.

He felt like kneeling before that blessed minister and saying "O man of God, I thank you," but without words, they seem so empty sometimes, he took the preacher's hand in his, and as the bright young eyes and the tender aging ones looked into each other's face, each felt a love and confidence passing understanding or expression.

* * *

The soldier answered the bugle's call, and Annie became a member of Parson Hall's household. Like all the heroic women during the Confederate war, Annie took up the new situation of life bravely. She learned to spin and weave homespun jeans, she braided palmetto hats, ripped off old soles and made new tops to them for shoes, she gathered thorns for pins, made ink of ink balls, cut up sweet potatoes for coffee, and dili-

gently tried, as she laughingly said, to make something out of nothing. In every way she was helpful to the good family so kind to her, but in the quiet of her own room she gave up often and wept and prayed for the absent soldier.

* * *

The civil war ended. Broken, shattered, ruined financially, the men came gloomily home. "Norman," said Parson Hall when they sat together again out on the wide gallery, "what are you going to do now?"

"I don't exactly know, Brother Hall. Reckon I'll go back to farming," replied the sun-browned soldier.

"Well, there's a tract of land right over here two miles, good, black land, with a cabin on it. You can make a good crop there if you will rent it."

So Norman Crosslin and his precious Annie moved to this new home. They had an old stove, two or three plates, a knife and fork, and one or two cups and saucers. They borrowed a bed and bedstead. The man who had shouldered a musket for three years bravely laid his hand on the plow handle. He took in a homeless soldier to help, and at the end of the season had a fine crop. Cotton commanded a good price. He sold well, and soon had $1000 put to his credit in the bank.

"Now, Annie, I'm going over to pay that blessed old preacher for keeping you three years," said Norman Crosslin one day. Annie's bright eyes sparkled a glad acquiescence.

"Brother Hall," said Norman, when he entered the good minister's home, "I've come to pay you what I owe you," and he pulled the crisp bills out of his pockets.

Parson Hall looked a little older, and the gray hair was beginning to get very conspicuous on his fine, benevolent head.

"Why, you don't owe me anything," he replied quickly and decidedly.

"Now, look here, Brother Hall, you kept my wife and baby for three years, clothed and fed them. I have a thousand dollars clear from my crop. I know you're hard run, I've brought it for you. You *must* take it."

"Norman Crosslin," said Parson Hall, his stooped shoulders straightened and his clear eye looking square into those of the young soldier, "you went for three years in the army and fought for my home as well as your own, when I could not go. Do you think you owe me? Go back home with your money. That place

you are on is for sale cheap. Buy it, and get a good start in life. You don't owe me a cent."

Again as the young man clasped the hand of the elder one he did not act a bit like a soldier.

* * *

Time fled along with rapid wing. Norman Crosslin prospered and became a "well-to-do" farmer, with a good bank account.

Parson Hall moved to a western county, and took a pastoral work in a little town on the Texas & Pacific Railroad.

* * *

The years of drouth and famine—the long-to-be-remembered years of 1885 and 1886—came, with terrible and continued failure of crops, which brought suffering, starvation, and utmost distress on thirty or forty counties of western Texas. People had lately moved into these counties from all parts of the country. What means they possessed had been used in getting land and building little homes. Few had made anything, even feed for stock. For fifteen months there was not a drop of rain. Those who had planted lost even their seed, and for two seasons nothing was raised for man or beast. Every stream and pond went dry. There was no

water for stock; hardly any for people. The prairies were covered with bones and dried carcasses of horses, sheep and cattle. Even the chickens died for want of water.

The dust blew over the fields, and the skies were as brass.

At last these people made known their condition. They were not persons who had been accustomed to ask for help. Through the Red Cross agency and by newspaper reports their desperate condition was made known, and the people of Texas became aware that thousands of her citizens were on the verge of starvation. The Legislature appropriated $100,000, and all over the State contributions were raised, and boxes of provisions loaded the western trains with glad bounty. Yet hundreds reached the point of absolute starvation before the supplies could be sent to them.

"Norman Crosslin," called a neighbor riding by, "what are you going to send to the drouth sufferers out West. I hear to-day that in the country where Parson Hall moved to not a family has bread to eat, and their clothing is rags mostly. Parson Hall and the old lady was wust off of any, 'cause when money fails the preachers rations stop first."

Norman Crosslin started like a man receiving a blow

"Parson Hall starving!" he exclaimed. He rushed to the lot, his horse was saddled in a twinkling.

"Annie, Parson Hall's a starving, I'm off for town," was all the explanation the wife received from the excited man.

* * *

"Just a contribution, a little money? No, sir, that won't do me." So he answered the relief committee in town when they approached him. He Chartered a Car.

He rushed to the stores. Flour, meal, bacon, hams, canned goods, corn, oats, wheat, potatoes, calico, flannels, domestic, hats, clothes, shoes, a purse with a fat check in it, everything this grateful Texas soldier could think of, was piled in that car.

"Chuck her full," he cried. "Oh, I'll get even with Brother Hall now," and he laughed a happy, boyish laugh, which was hardly understood by the men standing round. When his loaded car pulled out of town, he threw up his soft felt hat and yelled like a Comanche, and there wasn't a happier man in Williamson County that day than Norman Crosslin.

In the postoffice of the little town on the T. P. Railroad old Parson Hall was standing with a group of dejected looking men. His clothes were threadbare. He had aged rapidly.

He was not far from starvation. Suffering and anxiety were on every man's face in that little crowd waiting there, they hardly knew why, only there was nothing else to do. It was no use to plow or plant.

"I heard a man say to-day," said John Scott, "that there wasn't a live critter on his place 'cept his wife, an' she couldn't hold out much longer. Don't you think the Lord has kinder forsaken us, Parson?"

"No," gently replied the old minister, "I still trust my God."

"Well," said Tom Holland, noted for his unbelief, "You say, parson, that them the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and all I've got to say is I wish he hadn't took such a powerful fancy to me. I've lost everything I owned, but wife and the boys."

In a low, quiet, but firm voice the old gray-haired man of God continued, "I, too, have suffered, Tom. I know what it is to be on starvation, and to see my old lady want for food; but mark me, man, *God will provide.*

"Some way or other the Lord will provide;
It may not be my way,
It may not be thy way,
Yet in His own way
The Lord will provide."

The aged voice trembled as it repeated the verse of the familiar hymn, but the face of the old minister looked illuminated. "Parson Hall," yelled a red-faced, shock-headed boy as he rushed almost breathless in the door, "there's a big train in, with lots of things for everybody, and there's a *whole car, just for you*, packed *chuck full*, and on the side of the car is writ in big letters, *'For Parson Hall from Norman Crosslin.'*"

And Parson Hall—well, that dear old man sat down and wept like a woman, and the shock-headed boy looked on wonderingly.

THE RAILROAD AND THE PUG.

HE was a foolish kind of an old woman, a little "queer;" anyway, at least such was the opinion of the neighborhood.

However, when people are very poor, whatever they do is apt to be regarded from the severe side of our judgment. It is sad to be old. With the best surroundings, age has its gray, uncompromising solemnities, which will sober and warp the cheeriest heart.

When poverty is added to old age the person becomes pitiful in a repulsive way, and their little fancies and tendencies are, to a careless observer, silly notions and ridiculous habits.

Old Mrs. Jones had lived in her low, unpainted frame house at the extreme end of Main street, ever since the town had a name and habitation. She had lived there alone so long that no one thought of it as being pathetic or unusual. People who get old must expect loneliness, especially when they are poor.

Old Mrs. Jones was shy and timid. She did not visit, and few neighbors came to see her. She entered no

complaints, she made no cry, she did not court sympathy, and asked for no help. She kept to herself the desolation and the yearnings of her old, lonely heart.

By much practical industry and grinding economy she had become possessor of a goodly number of hens, sensible hens, who knew their egg laying duties, and performed them well.

She also owned a cow. Every Saturday, Mrs. Jones carried a basket of fresh eggs and a few pounds of butter to the nearest grocery house in the village. She went to the nearest, because of a shrinking and nervousness which made her avoid the crowd of people further up town. The proceeds of her butter, eggs, and the little milk she sold to some neighbors, constituted her whole means of support. Yet like "Betty Higden" she had put away a mite from this scant revenue, for a rainy day, and enough to provide a decent burial. It was noticed as she toiled slowly up the street every Saturday evening, carrying the products from her home to their market place, that she was always closely followed by a most disreputable pug dog. He was ugly from his little black stubby nose to his broad back and short bowlegs. He was sulky and unsocial. He would have

naught to do with anyone, not even the children who often tried to attract him, but with determined attention he followed closely every movement of old Mrs. Jones. People said, " what on earth could she see to like in that ugly thing?" There are always in village life women who find interest in idly watching every movement of other people, and so it was noticed and talked of that Mrs. Jones always went by the meat market and purchased quite a good sized piece of meat; in fact it was a big piece when you remember there was no one to feed but herself. Beef was high, and so people charitably concluded if "old Mrs. Jones could afford meat that way she wa'n't bad off, and didn't need much pity."

They did not know that the poor soul denied herself many things in order to make this weekly purchase, and that she did not taste a mouthful of the beef, but cooking it all at once so it would keep, daily gave a portion to the object of her affection, the one living, tangible creature in life which fate had left to her perishing heart, for love and serving. But folks did not know this. Old Mrs. Jones never told it, and Bob didn't think or care. His only concern being that he duly received his portion every meal time.

During the day old Mrs. Jones managed to keep very busy and the grim desolation of her old age was then held at bay. The chickens, her weekly source of revenue, were well attended. Their house was clean, their roost comfortable, their water fresh. Every afternoon she led her cow out to a little patch of green near by, and grazed her for an hour or two. Always the old lady was followed by the ugly pug Bob, who panted and snorted at her heels. When Mrs. Jones sat down on the flat rock at one side to watch her cow munching eagerly the tall, crisp grass, Bob always proceeded immediately to place himself in most comfortable manner, in the woman's lap where he slept, and snored in very human fashion.

People passing said, "How silly. Pity old Mrs. Jones hadn't something better to pet." Old Mrs. Jones never went to church or prayer meeting. She knew, poor soul, that her faded purple satteen, the one decent garment she had treasured for years, would debar her from a seat among the forward pews, and she could not hear well, way back, so with Bob again sleeping and snoring in her lap the old woman sat at home, read her Bible, felt better, kinder, more patient and forgiving in spirit, alone with the ugly pug, than she would probably

have felt with the thoughtless well dressed throng who gathered at the fine new church, the pride of the growing village.

"Dreadfully heathenish," people said. It is so easy to find a long list of faults among the poor.

It was also mentioned as one of her follies that she never sent a beggar from her door unfed. Encouraging tramps! Often she even rolled up a couple of biscuits well buttered and put in the hungry man's hand when he left. Then she usually went to bed supperless, saying as she fed Bob his portion: "You won't suffer for it Bob, and its good for me to fast sometimes." But of this part the neighborhood did not know, and they said, "If old Mrs. Jones could give food to every tramp she did not need much sympathy. It was more'n they could afford to do."

It was when the sun went down and night gathered into their homes the loved ones, that old Mrs. Jones felt with fullest force the grim desolation of the widow and the childless.

Night after night, when the winds blew and the wintry tempests howled, she sat with nothing living, save Bob, at her hearthstone. She had a fireplace, that

was one comfort. Her poor loving soul would have been doubly desolate had she been shut in with the gloominess of a stove. "In the hollow down by the flare," the pictures of past happiness flickered and came and went, as she sat by her little wood fire. Bob lay in her lap, and gently caressing his little soft ears, the woman talked to him as she could not have spoken to any human being. "I've nothing to love but you, Bob," and the little pug would look with earnest eyes, turn his round black head knowingly from side to side, then perhaps jump up and try to lick her worn, withered cheek. She felt happy to receive this loving attempt at caressing, even from a dog—she who had not felt a kiss upon her lip, since Johnny and her loved ones died.

"They used to love me, Bob. There was Johnny, my boy Johnny. If I could hear him say 'Mother, dear,' again. He got hurt you know, Bob, in the works over yonder. We couldn't save him. Perhaps if we had sent him to some of the big doctors he might have been saved, but we had no money, and he died. Then Jenny went next. She was her father's idol. Oh, Bob, it was a pretty sight to watch her run down the street yonder to meet father coming home. When she died it broke his heart. 'Wife,' he said, 'I will never get over it,'

and he never picked up again. Just as the cold and wet of winter came, he left me all alone. Oh, Bob, if I could have died too," and the poor woman would bend down upon the ugly pug's head, and weep the bitter tears of poverty and empty life. Bob would grunt and snort in doglike recognition of her sad stories. Even his unmelodious snuffings and snorings were welcome sounds upon this silent hearth. In the midnight dreary when the poor widow lay awake often for hours, Bob's snoring was actually comforting. He was something live and real. It is dreadful to tell, and women will exclaim in horror, nevertheless it was true, that when old Mrs. Jones went to bed she always tenderly lifted Bob up and put him at the foot, and in cold winter he crawled unrebuked close up to her back and lay there a warm, living, breathing comfort, through the wretched gloom of bitter, stormy nights.

Old Mrs. Jones had one relation, a distant cousin, who lived about sixty miles away. They had been companions in younger days, but for years had lived apart as the poor must, who have to count the cost of every mile of travel. As Mrs. Jones sat resting one day in early spring, the longing to see her cousin Ann took sudden possession of her soul. "Bob, I want to see some

one kin to me before I die. I'm going to save up everything I get, and perhaps I can go down on the train to Ann's." Bob winked and blinked his pop-eyes and snorted a glad approval of the happy ring of the woman's voice. My, my, he was ugly, that little black nosed, wrinkled, old-looking dog, but Mrs. Jones wound her withered arms round about him and hugged him close to her breast as if all the dead yesterdays and the hopes of the coming future were centered in her misshapen body.

This purpose to visit Cousin Ann became a settled one, and by saving carefully, and drafting some upon the little sum she had put away, the old lady felt at last ready for the momentous trip on the railroad.

But what about Bob?

What to do with him became a serious question. She could not bear to leave him. He would howl and grieve himself to death. He was dependent for food and water. She didn't know much about shipping a dog on the train. He might get hurt or killed. She could get a boy in the neighborhood to feed and water her cow and chickens, but Bob, he was different. Something might happen to him, and what would she do without Bob? She had nothing else to love in all the world, the world

so broad and bountiful to many, so restricted and bare for herself. Like an inspiration came the thought that Bob would lie in a basket, and be no bother to anyone. She certainly could carry him that way, and the conductor wouldn't care about it for so short a distance. With a confidence born of ignorance the innocent woman, taking a hamper basket and her small valise, started one bright June day for the train to make her long-planned visit to Cousin Ann. She wore her one good dress, the slazy, faded, purple satteen. It's style of make was past the memory of those she met upon the street. Her bonnet was an old-fashioned black straw, given by her husband years ago.

Love for the little dog trotting by her side had kept her heart green and child like, it had prevented many hard lines from forming on her aged face, and while the pathetic droop of her mouth and the pain in the eyes told of sadness in her life, yet you could not have said old Mrs. Jones was a disagreeable person to look upon. Bob ran at liberty until the good soul had purchased her ticket. She learned much to her dismay that she would have to change cars at T——— and take another line for the town where her cousin Ann lived. She was so unaccustomed to travel that changing cars seemed a

fearful undertaking, and this knowledge added to her trepidation. Her heart beat rapidly with unusual excitement as the train came sweeping up to the depot. Seizing Bob she put him in the basket, fastened the lid, and almost overcome with nervous anxiety got herself on board. Shrinkingly and hurriedly she entered the coach. Bob was not at all satisfied with the new condition of things. He yelped and tore and scratched in the basket, till every one was looking to see what on earth that old woman had. From the racket Bob made you would have thought that Mrs. Jones was carrying a miniature menagerie. Embarrassed, all in a flutter, the old soul found quickly a seat. Putting her mouth down to the open places in the basket she said in shaky but tender tones, "Why, Bob, here I am. Lie still, Bob, Mistis, has you," but all to no purpose. Bob howled and snorted, and then came the conductor. How big and stern and cross he looked. Bob was hot and mad. He puffed and blowed and barked like wild. "What have you in that basket?" asked the conductor in hard, irritated tone. Nervous and frightened the poor woman was hardly able to answer. "It's my little dog. I'm going only a little way, and I was afraid to put him in the baggage car."

"Well, you can keep him, but it's against the rules. Can't you make him go to sleep and be quiet?" But Bob had suddenly developed a will of his own. He panted, yelped, howled, and scratched his prison walls like a hyena. An ugly-featured woman on the next seat turned and fixed a stony gaze upon the basket.

Mrs. Jones found herself soon the observed of all in the coach. Many of the passengers began to look uneasy as if some varmint might be turned loose upon them at any moment. Presently the awful conductor came back and in a cross, rough tone said, "You must send that thing to the baggage car. The passengers are complaining about it. Porter, here, take this dog to the baggage car." The porter came up; the trembling lip, the pitiful face of the old woman as he took her one treasure in his arms, seemed to touch the good colored man, for in kindly voice he said: "Don't be uneasy about your little doggie, I'll fix him all right. He won't be hurt."

Perhaps the stern conductor relaxed a trifle as he saw the meek submission and evident distress of Mrs. Jones when she watched Bob carried out. Returning, he said in a pleasanter manner: "Don't worry, the dog

will be all right when you get to T——, where you change cars; just go to the baggage car and ask for him, and tell the man there I said you needn't pay anything." The woman could not answer him. She could not speak. The hot tears were rising and choking her. She felt so fearfully alone. She turned hastily to the window and in the waning evening shadows she saw only the sadness of everything; even a vision of the graves at home came before her as they were always coming, climaxes of woe in her life. A bitterness rose in her heart against every one in that coach. They, with their abundant blessings, troubled themselves about her one possession.

And Bob. How did she know he would not be hurt? What was one poor little dog to that great, rushing train?

What would she do if anything happened to him? To her anxious heart time passed slowly. She wished she had staid at home. "The sugar had lost its sweetness, the salt had lost its savor," the brightness had gone out of her journey.

At last the train pulled up at T——, where Mrs. Jones must change cars. Flurried, uncertain, and excited, she found the baggage car, and timidly

asked for her dog. The man looked down from his height upon her indifferently, and then went to the other end to untie Bob, who began jumping up and down in wild delight at seeing his mistress again. "It's two bits for him," said the man in a short, rough tone. "The conductor said I needn't pay anything for him," replied Mrs. Jones in frightened, tremulous voice. "Well, it's against the rules, but take the thing," the baggage man answered angrily, giving Bob a fling which sent him sprawling across the floor, and, in spite of the woman's effort to catch him, out onto the hard pavement in front. Bob was fat, he was heavy. He struck hard on his head —and fell with a thud. He lay limp and still. *His neck was broken.*

Quickly the lone woman stooped beside him and lovingly took his limber little body in her lap. "Oh, no, he wasn't dead, he couldn't be. Bob, her all." She pressed him close to her bosom, calling him, patting him, and smoothing with her wrinkled hand his yellow brown hair.

She forgot the train, forgot she had to change cars, forgot Cousin Ann, her visit—*all* but Bob.

The passengers looking carelessly out of the moving coaches saw in the shadow and coming gloom of the evening an old woman in faded purple dress bending motionless over the limp body of an ugly little dog.

THE NEGRO "OLD ABE'S" PROCLAMATION NEVER REACHED.

IT couldn't have happened anywhere else.

At least it didn't.

The little town of S[illegible], in central Texas, is just the place for such odd episodes in life to happen. It has all the surroundings and settings for romance and pathos, and peculiar experiences.

It is such a quaintly beautiful old place. Nature has been lavish here. As if wearied herself with the immense monotony of prairie, the bleakness of arid plains, the alkali lands with water "bitter as Marah," and miles of white, dazzling limestone, she had said, "I will make one line of poetry, one restful beauty spot," and then had arranged a wealth of river and spring, and bordered these with trees and boulders covered with many-colored shrub and flower; then, pleased with her work, had pronounced it good, and vowed in her enthusiasm that trade and traffic, roar and rattle of commerce, scream and rush of railroad, should never come to destroy it or invade the quiet of this gem of middle Texas. Men seeing the beauty of the spot began a little town

here "before de wah," but nature held her own, and in thirty years the little village had never grown beyond its early limits.

All its houses now are over a quarter of a century old. That is quite ancient in Texas. The sweet place has grown old slowly and placidly, like the face of some beautiful mother, whose life has been filled with good works.

Outside events have interested its people but little. The mail, brought during good weather in a hack, in bad on horseback, seems wonderfully antiquated in these days of rapid transit, but the people are satisfied with one mail a day, and this same old hack, as the only mode of communication with the outside world.

Among the worthy families living in S——— was an old Southern planter, who during the war had moved his family here for health and safety.

From their plantation they had brought one slave, old Aunt Mahaly, who was cook and general help, and was black mammy to the children, who loved her with that affection Southern children had always for these devoted creatures.

The "Proclamation of Emancipation" rang out to the listening world. From Virginia to Texas, from Ken-

tucky to the Gulf of Mexico, the negroes of all ages and condition heard the cry of freedom to the slave, but for Aunt Mahaly it sounded in vain.

Not the faintest echo of its message reached her.

She was deaf and dumb.

She was born a slave.

No conception of any other condition had a lodgment in her brain.

Her deafness had in a measure separated her from the social element of negro life even as a slave, and now the change of the condition of her race came into existence unknown and unnoticed by her.

There was no method used to make her understand the upheaval of established lines and the meaning of emancipation. Her life continued that to which she had been born, and the war, and all connected with it was an unknown tragedy to her. The only signs and symbols she understood were those used by the family in directing the cooking, washing, ironing, and those signals of love that hailed her from the sweet faces of the baby children, and the girls in this Southern home.

So there was one old slave for whom the Gospel of Freedom was preached in vain.

The planter and his family could not be expected to deplore the situation.

They continued for years to enjoy that which few in Texas possessed, "after the war," a faithful, unchanged cook and house servant. While other homes were upset by the new condition of the servant question, in this one at least the domestic affairs continued in the same old style.

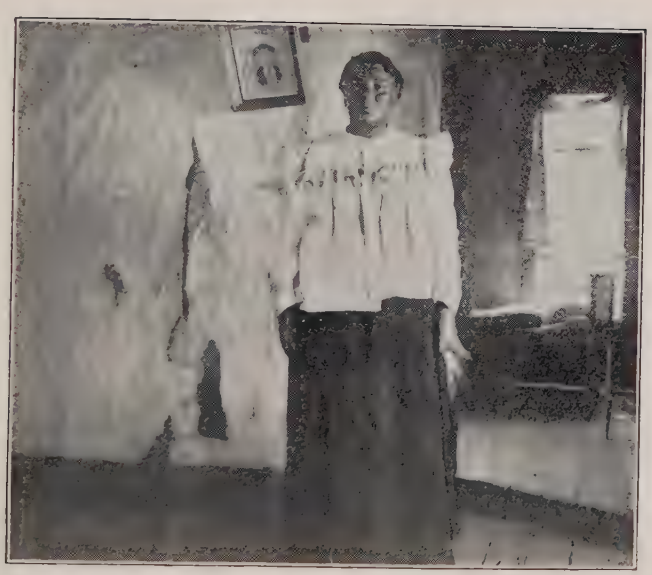
Aunt Mahaly had never visited away from home and she knew few other negroes.

It was some years after emancipation before the "colored" part of the community thought of the old soul and wondered if she knew that freedom had been vouchsafed to her.

The more they spoke of it the more it became manifest that she must be still living in the gall of bondage and ignominy of slavery.

One after another the colored folks went to interview Aunt Mahaly, but she was shy of "strange niggers." She could not understand their visiting and running around. Her lifelong habit of steady employment was fastened upon her.

She had no thought of being permitted to put aside her work and entertain like "white folks." She did not



pay much attention to these intruders, but busily kept on her usual labor, and the visitors utterly failed to make any impression upon her walled-in brain.

The oftener, however, the subject was discussed among the "freedmen," the more they felt that something must be done, and anxious talks were had about the best methods to reach Aunt Mahaly's benighted faculties.

The deaf and dumb alphabet was an unknown factor to them.

Of course it was not to be expected that the white family would aid or abet the colored population in their efforts at liberation and relieving them of a faithful servant.

They had every reason to be satisfied with the situation, and how Aunt Mahaly, who with them had a good home, plenty to eat, drink and wear, could be bettered by eating of this tree of knowledge was not very apparent to them.

However, at the colored prayer meetings, at the Sunday services, at the picnics, the fish fries, and quiltings, the subject of Aunt Mahaly's peculiar situation became the consuming theme of conversation.

"Dat ole fool nigger des cokin' an wuckin' herself to

def, fur dem white folks. It's plum scanlous. Some'un oughter take dat ole ooman bandaciously outer de house," exclaimed old Mary Johnson, who barely made a living washing and ironing every day and did not own even a shelter.

Uncle Pete Robinson, a bright light in the colored church, 'lowed, "De good Laud'ud open Mahaly's eyes sometime, des as he did Paul's wid a flash of lightning." His scripture was a little mixed, but his faith was all right.

Old Joe, the shoemaker, a member not quite so full of grace, remarked, "De Laud'ud let it run on a powerful long time. Pore ole soul she'd wuk hersef to def, an up an die fust ting dey knowed, an' nebber know she was free."

Old Rachel, one of the characters of the town, announced the fact that she was "gwine to see de fool niggah. What's de use Brer Robinson, waitin' fur de Laud to come. I'm boun I'll make Mahaly know suthing's happened, an' she's a free niggah."

So one morning Rachel hurried through her housekeeping. She fed her chickens, and watered her old sorrel horse.

She was one of the colored folks who had gathered

round herself the comforts of life and owned a home. Freedom meant something to her provident character. Arrived at the planter's home she went direct to the kitchen. Old Mahaly was very busy and giving Rachel a hurried greeting went on with her work. Old Rachel managed to arrest her attention a moment. Then, beginning a series of pantomimic movements, she endeavored to represent fighting, gun-shooting, blood-flowing, and "war doins" generally, and then what it meant to be free.

As she was getting excited and vigorous in her gesticulations, the look of surprise on Aunt Mahaly's face gave place to an expression of abject fear, and she turned and fled into the house where the white folks were, and could not be induced to come out till she saw the discomforted Rachel going down the hill toward town.

The disappointed Rachel brought an exciting report to the next prayer meeting.

Some talk was had of kidnapping Aunt Mahaly, but the little town was hardly progressive enough for that, so after much "prar" and deliberation it was thought best for Aunt Rachel to again invade the benighted region, taking with her the colored preacher, a man

of great power among the freedmen, and with such combination of force, once more "tackle" Aunt Mahaly.

As before, she was found cheerily doing her work in the kitchen, and she did not at all relish the interruption.

When she saw Aunt Rachel, who had so frightened her before, and the sombre-looking preacher also, a look of bewilderment spread over her old black face, and she stood a moment gazing at them as if dazed.

The preacher improved the opportunity by kneeling quickly down before her, and beginning a prayer of supplication for knowledge from on high to enter the benighted soul. With eyes closed and with excited motions he wrestled powerfully in prayer.

"You needn't be a prayin' dar for dat fool niggah, she's done gone," broke in Rachel's angry voice. Meekly the preacher rose from his knees.

The object of his prayerful effort was nowhere to be seen, and he walked out with discomfited air and vainly tried to overtake old Rachel, who had deserted him.

The colored population at last gave Aunt Mahaly up as a being predestined to everlasting captivity.

Faithfully and peacefully the old negro now worked

out her own life's problem, in the path in which she was born, and which no change could perhaps have improved as far as the comforts of life were concerned.

Age came upon her with its decrepitude and she was relieved of every hard labor and waited on kindly by those whom for long years she had lovingly served.

One day over the little village of S——— came the news that Aunt Mahaly was dead.

The colored folks debated about giving her funeral much attention. As a body they resented the position she had occupied, and death could hardly wipe out the offense. At last, however, a good many turned out, and nearly every white person in town attended her burial services. With her limited powers she had been faithful, kind, and true, and she was respected for her real goodness of disposition.

She had gone where the song of freedom would be on her lips, no longer dumb.

Slowly and tenderly white hands lowered her coffin into the grave, where all lines are obliterated, and the last link with the old system of slavery was broken, the only slave in the South was free.

THE IRISHMAN WHO DIDN'T SCARE.

IT was stormy times in the county of H———, in Texas. Not in nature's realm, for autumn glories were all around, making earth glad with joyous beauty.

The sumach bushes were like individual bouquets of crimson, the cottonwood rivaled in yellow, and the lordly pecan, with its unequaled nut waiting for the touch of the frost, was rapidly taking on its fall colors.

The Spanish oak, the liveoak, and the hackberry were pleasantly toning their summer greens down to sober browns. Nature was too beautiful for politics and voting and such elements to thrust themselves forward. But with ruthless disregard of autumn beauty men strove with angry passions in the county of H——— about questions of boundary and lines, settlements and town sites.

In these frontier counties, far removed from railroads and isolated from older communities, men became more than ever controlled by cliques and neighborhood

leaders, and settled matters of local interest without much law and less gospel.

The location of a county site is generally a matter of much contention and exciting dispute. The intense selfishness in humanity generally gets uppermost. Every neighborhood wants the settled valuations and definite future which comes to real estate with the location of the county courthouse and its followings. Two towns in the county of H——— had drifted into a bitter, determined, struggle for the county site. For some time the question of the best situation had been discussed at every gathering in the different homes, and over the village counters. Even at campmeeting the thought of soul-saving seemed to be lost sight of, and the subject of the courthouse had engrossed the audience, at least the male portion, and the preacher's words fell upon very stony ground. And now the election would soon be at hand, and the fight was on. The town of E——— was to all fair-minded, disinterested persons the right point for the county site. Almost exactly in the center, with plenty of water, timber, and good farming country adjacent, no reasonable objection could be made to its claims.

Equally well provided was the other town of M———— which struggled for the prize, but it was far removed from the center, in fact was on the extreme outside edge of the county. Nearly all its town plot and the lands around it were owned by a land company composed of three or four men living there.

It was that most unfair, one-sided question of whether money or right should rule.

This land company sent out agents to pursuade, intimidate, or buy all voters possible for their town of M————. The men who had conscience and backbone stood for the little central town of E————, but this class are never over-numerous. Matters seemed to be getting dismally hopeless for the village in the center.

Hotter and hotter grew the discussions. Friends became enemies, communities were divided, and men on both sides endeavored to convince and pursuade by blows, and pummelings, and knocks that were not at all apostolic.

Into this broil a young man, Charles O'Neil, a rising young lawyer, had thrown himself with resolution and steady purpose. The community at E—— had requested him to plead the justness of their claim, and to stump the sparsely settled county. He

espoused the cause of the little central town. He went against his own personal interest financially, his own popularity with the moneyed element of the county, and he entered a fight against well-equipped capital, and men who would spend it to gain their ends.

He did not own even a foot of land in E———, and he did own a nice lot in the town of M———, upon which he was just finishing a neat home, but he went in for the best interest of his county. He knew it would be a tough fight, and he was well aware if he lost that he was everlastingly "snowed under," and in western parlance, would have to "pull his freight." But the strain from old Ireland was strong in his blood, and Charley O'Neil championed the cause of the weak little village, knowing that the fight would be bitter, and that even his life might be in danger if he undertook to oppose the capitalists at M———. He bravely made his announcements for speaking, and started out on the campaign. Threatening letters came to him, messages were sent advising him not to fill this and that appointment, or he would be dealt with. He knew he was shadowed night and day. Go where he would, some member of the faction at M——— would shortly appear. Yet he resolutely pursued his determined way.

The editor of a little paper gotten up in the most primitive style at M——— published a slanderous and abominable lot of stuff about him. Editor Parker looked a trifle uneasy in a day or two after when O'Niel walked up stairs to his little office, and fixing his deep blue Irish eyes upon the newspaper man, asked "what he meant," then quickly turning, in less time than it takes to tell it, knocked the printing matter into "pi," and pitched everything he could out of the window. It was a rather reckless method of procedure, but it silenced the press for awhile at least. The cause of the town of E——— gained ground, and at last it was the day before the votes were to be cast. Charley O'Niel sat pleasantly reflecting that he had enough votes promised to carry the little central town.

He was at his own house now, completed in M———. A bonnie, sweet-eyed wife and baby girl were waiting in one of the old States, waiting so anxiously for the message saying the home in the new country was complete and to come quickly to it and the loving husband and father.

He was going to sleep in his house where he had already gathered what little furniture the country afford-

ed, and now he would get pen and ink and write the long looked for message.

He wondered if wife would like the new West, and his heart gave answer for the precious little woman who had linked her life with his. "Whither thou goest I will go also; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

A shadow came before him, and looking up he saw a group of men quickly entering the room. They were the landowners and faction in M———, with a group of toughs in the back ground. In a moment O'Niel was on his feet, well poised, cool, collected, his clear blue eyes flashing with fearless light.

"Mr. O'Niel," said the leader, and even then he quailed before the keen glance which seemed to pierce through him, "we have come to warn you for the last time. You must promise not to vote to-morrow, and not to vote any of your men. If you do not agree to this, you will be taken to-night and tarred and feathered and before morning you will fill that grave yonder we are having dug out there by your fence. We give you a moment to decide."

Did Charley O'Niel falter?

Do Irishmen falter in time of danger?

Did Old Hickory flinch at the cannon's fire?

Did Stonewall Jackson fear to do his duty?

"You dastardly coward," rang out the clear voice, "come on right now, one or all of you; touch me if you dare. I shall go to the polls to-morrow. I shall vote for the central town of E———, the right place for the court house, and I *shall not* vote just to put money in the pockets of you land-sharks. I will sleep here to-night without closing door or window, and I have no weapon of any kind. Come and take me if you dare. You have my answer; now leave my house."

Oh, the power of a brave soul. Even a brute quails before it. The men wavered, turned, and slunk out of the house.

Charley O'Niel walked toward the open window, and in the light of the setting sun he noticed for the first time the men digging the grave close by the side of the fence. It can not be a very refreshing sight to look at your own grave being dug. He felt a slight relaxing of nerve.

The thought of wife and baby did not restore him.

He tried to be calm.

He faced the questions of the hour. If there was

danger, he would brave it; but he would not write the message to-night.

He knew not what might be in store for him.

It had grown quite dark while he was thinking.

He roused himself and opened every door, procured lights and put in each room, and calmly lay down—and morning found him undisturbed.

When the polls opened he quietly walked there; cast his vote for the central town of E———. There was a look in his eye and a matchless bearing of courage that made him master, and no hand was raised against him.

When the votes were counted the little town of E——— was the county site, and the blue-eyed Irishman sent his message, "Come," to wife and baby.

When the courthouse was built Charley O'Niel walked into it as the county clerk.

He never let the grave be filled up at his place in M———, and the sidewalk now hides it from view. The whole thing was most likely a bluff to frighten him, but Irishmen don't "scare" worth a cent.

X "EUREKA."

THE girl listened eagerly when her teacher told the old story of Archimedes, his labored study to discover a means by which to detect adulteration in Hiero's crown, and the triumphal exclamation that burst from his lips, "Eureka!" when success crowned his effort at last.

"Eureka." The name touched her ear like music.

The girl had a poetic, emotional nature, a nature to which all sounds and sights brought a message.

The little things of life that passed by others rested in her soul and made pleasure or pain, she could hardly tell why. So the word clung to her thoughts. She went to her seat saying over to herself, "Eureka, Eureka."

"Mother," she said throwing down her bonnet and books at home, "I heard the sweetest word to-day. The teacher told us 'Eureka, Eureka.' The name clings to me. I feel some way that it has a meaning for me, for something in my own life."

The mother gazed tenderly at the brown-eyed girl,

just budding into womanhood, and wondered, as mothers will, what long, long thoughts were passing through her child's unmatured brain, and sighed at the fear of coming events which perhaps even now "cast their shadows before" on the pathway of this joyous childish life.

One fair night in June the mother watched this daughter standing at God's altar, pledging her love, her life, to Will Carson, and the word the girl had told about came to the woman unbidden—"Eureka, Eureka," and wonderingly she said in her mother heart, what is my child finding? Is it happiness or will it be sorrow and care? The marriage had been one which she disapproved.

Will Carson was a fashionable tippler. He could give the brightest toast, holding high the light champagne; he stood the longest with ready jest and witty repartee around the glistening beauty of the punch bowl, and it was whispered that the gallant, dashing, handsome fellow often left the banquet hall in a very muddled condition. But Mary, brown-eyed, sunny-hearted Mary Robinson, "knew Will would straighten up all right when they were married;" and she loved him, dear little girl, with the first fresh emotion of her young heart.

But Will Carson did not reform. The young couple

planted their own "vine and fig tree" in Texas. Many perplexing troubles came to meet them in their struggle for success. Will Carson, with a beautiful nature, a fine mind, and a fair prospect, drowned every bright opportunity in drink, till the story, repeated yearly, daily, hourly, all over our land, of the prostitution of everything good, became also his sad record, and the family sank to poverty, want and distress.

Then the wife struggled to the front and became the captain and pilot of their drifting barque. She began painting exquisite little scenes, renewing a talent for which she had once received many words of praise.

Her paintings sold; she purchased material, worked up a good custom, and finally some pupils. By increasing effort she put food in the larder and drove with labor of her hands the wolf from the door.

But accomplishing this did not satisfy her.

To reclaim and save the man she loved, the husband to whose life she had bound her own for weal or woe, became her prayer, her consecrated effort. Will Carson had become a wreck physically, as well as morally.

Nature sends in her bills for squandered constitutions and wasted health, and we pay in atrophied muscle, aches and hourly pain.

Mary labored patiently. She spoke no reproach. Even when the agony of her heart was wearing her life away, she met this man with a quiet endurance, a woman's gentle touch, a woman's tender, nursing care.

Will Carson knew as he stood before some bar, pouring whatever liquor he could get down his throat, that even when he reeled home no word of bitter accusation would greet him, that gentle hands would help him to rest, and minister without one impatient word to his every want, and even in his most besotted moments he loved and revered this little woman, his much wronged wife.

But the demon had him, and with his body a physical wreck, he became too weak to fight a battle or struggle for reformation.

The thought of Mary's life was, "What can I find to help him?"

"Dear Lord, help me to find something to strengthen and save him," became her daily prayer.

The good doctor of the little town said to her one day, when she unburdened her heart's desire to him, talking in the confiding manner one can to their family physician, "Mrs. Carson, Will can not reform until his

physical man is restored. It takes a sound body as well as a sound mind to save a man."

Then the desire to send her husband to just the right health-restoring place grew to be the object round which her every labor centered. She toiled early and worked late, for love is helpless often, without gold. She sewed, she taught, she painted. She stinted him in naught, but she deprived herself of almost sufficient food, and the sunny days of June that year found Will Carson under the pines and in the mountain gorges at the beautiful city in the Ozarks of Arkansas, drinking the pure water, and breathing the strength-giving breath of the eternal hills at Eureka.

The tonic of nature filled his wasted body; he felt soon the spring of life arousing every weakened nerve. He had a poetic disposition. Once he had responded to every touch of Mother Earth. He had been a loving child of nature, and susceptible to her every mood. He had hunted and fished and "laid him flat along" many a mossy bank and rippling stream.

In his early life he had been a country boy. He was back again in the realm he had once so loved, and nature in all her pristine beauty and glory lay near him in this health resort in the Ozarks.

Five minutes' walk brought him to mountain tops, to sacred, solemn silence, or to deep, shadowy vales. He lay for hours alone on shelving rock with great straight pine trees above him, and the man thought, and thought, as he had not done for years. Every day made him stronger. He soon walked with ease to the top of Pond Mountain; he wandered over the sides of the beautiful Crescent. Why should only the rocky boulders, the massive mountain, be strong and steadfast?

How many grand things he remembered had happened on mountain tops. The picture of "Bonaparte on the Alps" had held him entranced when a boy. His mother had read to him of the Ark which rested on Mount Ararat. From Mount Sinai God gave the law to Moses. David placed the Ark of God on Mount Zion. Abraham went up unto Mount Moriah with only Isaac, and the solitude of God. The Cross was planted upon a mountain, and Christ went upon a mountain to pray. How could a man be base and lowly and beastly near a mountain?

He gazed up at the towering pines and thought in his deeply roused emotion, why should only the pine be tall, symmetrical, beautiful? Why should not man be more so?

Nature was putting down the beast in the man, and reasserting and reanimating the soul in him.

He walked with new-gained strength out to the lovely Sanitarian Lake. The genial boatman, full of love for the mountain scenery, said: "Oh, come and take a boat ride; you mustn't miss that, now! I'll row you out. Look at the sunshine on those ripples! Don't be a chump! Git in the boat, man," and they rowed up and down the placid sheet of water, and over to the mountain side beyond. The finer nature of Will Carson was clamoring for its place. The purity, the tonic, the grandeur of every thing was rousing his soul to its original worth again. "Step out on the mountain side man, and pluck a flower, and send to your wife and babies," cried the boatman, who, like Burns, saw the wee daisy and wayside flower. "Pick that dainty blue thing at your feet, sir, and send it to yer swateheart, if ye's have one."

Yes, Will had a sweetheart, a blessed one. A picture of the dark-eyed wife, way back in Texas, the loving woman toiling at home to pay his bills up there in "God's Temple," the groves and mountains, came to him, and there were tears in his eyes, and a big lump in his throat as he stepped back in the boat.

So the days passed in this beautiful health resort, and the man gained strength every hour. With this improved physical condition came the constant effort of his better nature and his own noble manhood to gain its place once more in his being, to reassert itself in his life.

He had wandered one day for hours. He had sat in the shadowed seat at the Basin Spring, and drank great draughts of the Nectar of Nature. He had passed on and rested at the Harding, and then gone over to the mountain side to the Spring Magnetic. On, on he strolled, until, high up the mount beyond the Crescent, he found himself a mossy seat under the shadowy pines.

The cooling zephyrs swept his brow, the solitude of God's eternal groves was about him. All the past of his wasted life came before him, and through every scene, the vision of a loving, devoted woman, working, toiling at home for his redemption appeared in her purity and unselfish fidelity. The God of nature had his hold once more on the man's soul. There in the depth of the shadow, in the calm and stillness of the forest, on the throne of the mountain, Will Carson threw himself prostrate upon the ground, and the cry that burst from his lips, unused to prayer, was the cry

of the publican of old, "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner!" There in the grandeur of the Ozarks he fought the battle with the demon whose clutch was on his manhood, his brain, his body. Doubt and fear oppressed the man, shame and despair crippled him, but the repairing forces of this grand health resort had filled his veins with a tonic, better, stronger than wine, and rising at last with arms outstretched toward the sky above the singing pines, with face aglow and moistened eye, Will Carson cried, "God help me, I *will* be a man."

With rapid impulse he moved down the mountain side, and on to his quiet room.

When the mail bag left Eureka that night on the south-bound Frisco train, it carried to a little, trusting, toiling wife, way down in Texas, the sweetest letter woman ever received from the man she loved. Reading its words of noble resolution, and believing in her faithful heart the resurrection of that long degraded soul, the patient wife, the long suffering wife, the wife who would have counted her life as naught to save her husband, dropped upon her knees and cried with joyous exclamation:

"'Eureka.' Dear Lord, thou didst help me to find it."

"IF."

"I'LL tell you, mother, I won't go to school any longer; I'm tired of it. I want to get out and try the world and make something."

They stood upon the little porch in the quiet country home in Missouri—the mother and her son. The evening shadows tremblingly played upon the hot, flushed boy's face, and the setting sun softly kissed the gray hair of the distressed mother.

"I want to go to Texas. There's land and work and a chance for a fellow down there. Tom and Ned Matthews are going and I'm going, too," the boy continued with a determined ring of voice, yet he glanced uneasily, even tenderly at the weeping woman near him.

He was her only son. She had indulged him always. She had weakly given up to his "hard-headedness" when he was a prattler at her feet. It was too late now to assert parental authority.

Yet she said, "You can not go."

In the "wee small hours," when the little household was quiet, a boy crept stealthily out, and rapidly passing down the walk and through the little gate, strode with feverish haste toward the public highway. There were two forces at work within him—one driving him on to the new, the untried, the land of promise—Texas; the other drawing him back to a mother of whose devotion he was fully conscious, and to the home roof where his days so far had known no other shelter.

His boyish companions in this venture, waiting at the crossroads, laughed gaily as he rushed up to them in a scudding, frightened way.

"I didn't believe you'd come," was the first greeting. Didn't think your grit ud last."

That settled it. "Yes, he'd go. He'd show him he had grit."

* * *

The Missouri, Kansas & Texas was speeding its way to St. Louis. On, on, rushing over plain and steep, and river and curve, dashing like a living thing over miles and miles of country, carrying its burden of human freight on to joy or sorrow, on to terminations of pleasantness or climaxes of woe.

"There is a man who looks very ill," suddenly said a lady across in the seat opposite us.

She was plainly dressed, and seemingly from the country, with the sweet, womanly face one is always so glad to meet. Unspoiled by the world, her interest in humanity made her lovingly watchful.

We glanced in the direction she indicated.

A young, boyish looking man, evidently suffering intensely, lay with his head thrown back upon the dark red cushions of the seat.

"I believe he is dying," said the kind woman as with motherly instincts she rose, and quickly passing us, went to the sick man.

She brought him water, took her own handkerchief, and bathed his face.

"I am dying," he said, when a little revived. "If—I could only last until we cross the line into Missouri and get home."

"Hadn't you better take a sleeper?" asked the lady earnestly.

"I haven't the money to pay for it," he weakly replied.

Quickly this dear woman moved up and down through the crowded coach, and money poured into her hands.

Men are so good to give in cases of genuine suffering. We allow ourselves to talk in all sorts of cynical ways about the selfishness of man,—the careless, unfeeling rich. It sounds wise, experienced, but before the sun goes down some appeal is made to manly generosity and we bow the head in involuntary admiration of liberal deeds and noble acts—proud that we are in touch and kinship with such humanity.

Several of the ladies and gentlemen in the coach now gathered near the sick man. Some tenderly helped him to the sleeper, others went into grips and took him food and stimulants. One more thoughtful even found a doctor and brought him to the sufferer.

"He is dying," said the physician as he returned from the sleeper to our coach. "He prays to live till he gets to Missouri, but he will die, I think before we cross the line."

How subdued and still were the passengers on that crowded coach of the Katy train. Panting, blowing, rushing, rushing, the iron horse was carrying this dying man to the border line of his own State, and to the boundary line of a new country—the country from which no traveler ever returns, the home not made with

hands. Even as the men and women arranged the chairs and settled themselves for the night, they asked about the dying man, and how soon we would cross the line.

"He had run away from home a few years ago," so the dear motherly woman from the country told us, as she passed back and forth from the sleeper. "He had run away to Texas. He knew he had broken his mother's heart, for he had not even written to her. Yes, he knew he was dying, but he said, 'If I could only reach Missouri and die with mother's arms around me—if I could live but to say, "Mother, forgive!" I would be willing to go.'"

"Doctor, keep me alive till we get over into Missouri." "Are we near the line?" "Will I live till morning, doctor?" were the cries of this dying soul.

The midnight hour approached. The moon went down, and the stars twinkled and gleamed on the flying coaches.

"We are crossing the line," said the kind conductor to the sympathetic passengers.

Then suddenly the door opened, the motherly face

of the dear, good woman from the country appeared. In trembling voice she told us, "The boy is dead."

His soul had crossed the line into that unknown country, and his lifeless body was speeding on to the wretched, childless mother in Missouri.

OLD JACK.

HERE'S always a woman in it. We can hardly think of heaven without a woman in it, and certainly not hell, says some one.

To Jack woman came early in life, and she sent him to the gutter.

Jack was born in the fine old county of Cork. He was a Milesian. The strain of Ireland was pure in his blood—dear old Ireland that has given the world a Pitt, a Goldsmith, an O'Connor, an Emmet; the land that produced in one county the parentage of such men as Jackson, Calhoun, Buchanan, Arthur, Bryant; the nation which has furnished our navy and army with an army of bravest commanders; the Emerald Isle that gave Virginia Patrick Henry and our Southland a Stonewall Jackson; the country whose struggles for freedom have touched the hearts of millions. Ireland and America, groaning under the same bondage of unjust taxation and cruel restriction, both rebelled against the tyranny of England. She had her heel upon Ireland; only her

toes reached America. We pulled away from her. Ireland couldn't.

But even with bondage and famine, eviction and failure, Ireland has given her full measure of nobility and heroism to the world.

However, Jack wasn't a hero.

He was simply an Irish boy, a regular "Paddy from Cork," but like all his nation, he was loving, brave and true.

He grew up to manhood during the bitter times when the corn laws protected the English farmer and ruined those of Ireland, when breadstuff became too costly for the laboring people to buy. Jack's life was early saddened and darkened by the wretched surroundings of home.

The failure of the potato crop added horrors to the already pitiful condition of the poor, and a million of Ireland's wretched people starved. He heard the wails of the dying even in his own cabin home, where children begged for grains of corn to keep the little life they had "Till the coming of the morn." He saw father, mother, brother, and sisters sicken and die from disease and hunger. Why he did not die Jack could never exactly understand. Nothing made him cling to the

gloomy existence which had been his portion always, except the tender affection he bore a little Irish maiden, Nora Flannigan, who lived hard by. The look of her dark blue eye, and the liking she had for him became his only motive for life, and his love grew to be the one absorbing passion of his desolate manhood.

Nothing else was left him.

When the suffering of Ireland's poor became known abroad, money and provisions poured into this unhappy island from many generous American hands, and finally Jack obtained passage on a ship about to sail to the "land of the free and home of the brave."

If he could get where a man had a chance in life, he would make a home for Nora.

When by the old hawthorn hedge, bathed in moonlight, Jack folded the blushing Nora for one moment to his brave heart, he had promised to send his first earnings to bring her over to America, where life would be worth the effort of living. This was his farewell.

All the next year, to Jack steadily toiling in New York at any work offered his willing hands, the months passed slowly. His one thought was Nora. He saved all his earnings. He lived upon coarse food. He slept any-

where. Every dollar he added to his pile meant one step nearer Nora Flannigan.

Many months passed, but at last one glad June day, the long looked for emigrant ship appeared off New York, and when at Castle Garden Jack clasped hands with the bright-eyed Irish maiden his happiness was so intense that it was almost akin to pain. He had brought a priest, and the two were quickly made one flesh. Then Jack found time for words of kindly greeting to Mike Donahue, an old acquaintance and former rival for the rosy-cheeked Nora.

Mike had been her fellow passenger on the emigrant vessel during the two months' passage across the ocean.

Jack, by unlimited toil, had procured a good little home for his bride, and to its humble shelter he generously invited Mike Donahue. Somehow to Jack, even in the beginning of this first great tide of joy, came in a subtle, almost unconscious suggestion, the feeling that Nora was not exactly her old self.

"The child's honin for the Ould Counthree," sighed Jack alone. "She can't help it, the lovin' darlin'. She'll be happy after a while."

Two months on an emigrant ship was not the best

school for a girl's morals. Jack came to his home one afternoon, that little home that held his all—his queen. He had toiled hard all day, but there was "sunshine in his soul" as he neared this home.

His trusting, loyal heart had not entertained one note of warning suspicion. The ashes on the hearth were cold. The house was empty. Nora and Mike Donahue were gone. When, after hours, he fully understood and realized the great desolation which had come to him, Jack went out of the shadowed home, down the brightly lighted street, and by midnight he was the drunkest man, in the lowest den, in a sin-cursed quarter of the city.

He never saw his house again.

He became a vagabond and wanderer in the fullest sense. He had nothing left in life. His ship had lost its anchor. He drifted from town to town, from State to State. He drank in the lowest dive in San Francisco, and lay dead drunk in New Orleans. Daringly, supremely reckless, working just enough to keep in liquor, he wandered homeless, reckless, ever moving on.

Generous, kind-hearted, witty, a good worker, he might have lived well and accumulated property, but he drank with an abandon that had complete disregard

of self, almost an heroic indifference to his own life. In some most desperate moods he drank everything his hands could get in the form of stimulants. Cologne, Jamaica ginger, went down his throat by the bottle full.

"Jack, I can't see why you don't die," people would say.

"Be Jabers, its meself can't see, either," was his careless reply.

At times be bought his own coffin and placed it in convenient quarters, but some man poorer than himself would die, and Jack, generously giving up his own chance for a "decent funeral," would donate the coffin to the dead man's service.

"Bury me wid me face downward," Jack would laughingly say, "for I don't want to have the nightmare after I'm dead."

Drifting and drinking, Jack at last after many years took up his abode in more permanent manner in a little railroad town in Texas. He was an aged man. His hair was gray.

His face was shriveled and disfigured. Strange to say, although he had defied every law of health, Jack had lived to be an old man.

He was honest; he owed no man long for anything. He

had always the ready jest, the kindly answer to those who cared to speak to him. The school boys all liked old Jack. In all his drunken, degraded moods he never mentioned, smirched, or reviled the woman whose wreck he was.

"Jack, why haven't you married and lived a sober life," people would ask, who knew nothing of his history.

"Begorra, its afraid of me mother-in-law I am," he jestingly replied.

"Jack, do you hate women," some one said one day.

"Me mother was a woman," he gently replied.

The end came cruelly at last. Beastly drunk, he lay across the railroad track one dark night. No one ever knew whether he went there intentionally or fell in his maudlin condition before the coming engine.

He would not tell.

He was picked up, horribly mutilated, and carried to the hospital dying.

"Who are ye," he whispered to the sweet-faced woman, bathing his clammy brow.

"I'm the King's Daughter," the nurse replied tenderly.

The dying man looked long at her face. Perhaps he was thinking of what he might have been had a good, true woman stood by his side in life's pilgrimage.

"I'm dying," Jack said with labored breath. "I'm so glad. You've a swate face, allanna, I loved a woman onest. Would ye mind taking my ould hand? I would like to die touching a good woman's hand.

Jack's wanderings were over.

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